

TRAVELLING WITH THE SPIRIT:
PENTECOSTAL MIGRATION RELIGIOSITY BETWEEN GHANA AND AUSTRALIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The desire to migrate to foreign lands is widespread within contemporary Ghana. Among the Ghanaians, there is a growing sense that migrating overseas requires spiritual empowerment. Evidence of this development can be seen in the emergence of “passport and visa industries” that depend on the activities of a multitude of religious agents and ritual experts. Correspondingly, Ghanaian religious agents are now constantly generating new strategies designed to meet prospective migrants’ demands. The practice of enlisting the help of religious agents and practices for the purpose of international migration is having a marked effect on the Ghanaian religious landscape in two key ways: first, it has created a demand for religious agents who possess the power to solve migration-related spiritual problems; second, in response to this demand, Ghana's purveyors of spiritual powers have shaped their practices to inspire and enable migration.

Using data from extensive fieldwork among members of the Church of Pentecost (CoP) and Power Chapel (PC) in Ghana and Australia, this thesis offers an account of the role of religious narratives and rituals in the experience of Ghanaians migrating abroad, and among Ghanaian migrants in Australia. The thesis argues that the present preoccupation with overseas migration, and its interconnection with religion, is creating a migration religiosity (MR) that inspires and enhances migrations, and which forms the basis for migrants’ extension of Ghanaian religions from the so-called global-South to the global-North. This MR operates in each phase of the migration experience. In the homeland, prospective migrants use MR to facilitate their international travel. On the journey, MR is the source of spiritual protection and safety. MR continues and takes on new roles as migrants use it in meeting new conditions and experiences in their new land. Migrants’ reliance on MR for place-making as they settle into their new lives in the diaspora motivates them to create worshipping Cells. These Cells become the setting in which Ghanaian migrants reformulate their religious traditions, and from which they launch proselytising practices or reverse missions to the host community.

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CHAPTER ONE

PENTECOSTALISM AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATIONS

1.0 General Introduction

Transnational migration is growing in scope, complexity, and impact. One distinguishing feature of the contemporary global mass population movements is the involvement of religion in the process. On the one hand, religion plays a significant role in the course of the migrations. Beginning with their decisions to migrate, through to their settlement in the host communities, migrating individuals and groups use religion. On the other hand, migration offers channels for religious traditions to cross international boundaries. International migration also enables local religions to establish network ties with transnational religious institutions and personalities.

Ghana has in the last four decades, witnessed a phenomenal increase in the emigration of its citizens to different parts of the globe. The majority of these individuals leave Ghana because they want to enjoy better living conditions elsewhere. Nations in Europe, North America, and Australia which Ghanaians consider richer are particularly attractive to Ghanaian migrants. A striking element of these migrations is how the prospective migrants and those who have already settled in their destinations rely heavily on religion. Ghanaian people who want to migrate, those who are migrating, and those who have already completed the process and have settled in their host communities, enlist the help of ritual specialists for migration-related concerns, from all the religious traditions in Ghana—Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Ghana's indigenous religious traditions. The individuals also rely on the beliefs of the religious traditions to create narratives that help them to make sense of their migratory experiences. As a result, there are robust "passports and visa industries," that depend on the activities of a "plethora of counsellors, diviners, prophets, travel shrines, marabouts, and pastors in Ghana." Responding to the growing demand for religious resources by persons involved in international migration, Ghana's religious institutions are also coming up with innovative practices centred on international migration. One can conclude that international migration is one of the most important processes affecting happenings on the Ghanaian religious landscapes both home and abroad.

1.1 Thesis Statement

The mindset of many Ghanaians who aspire to migrate to the West is that success in their quest for entry and legal settlement in their desired destinations in the West, require some form of divine intervention and fortification. This intervention will ensure a safe journey, protection from malevolent forces, and luck in their encounters with immigration authorities. This mindset provides a window for understanding why the prospective migrants link their travel aspirations with their participation in various forms of religious practices. The practices include rituals that help clientele as they prepare for the journeys, during the journeys, and as they arrive and settle in their host land. Some religious agents and lay worshippers have also ingeniously created genres of migration-centred narratives. These narratives speak to the questions that prospective migrants have about different aspects of their migrations. Indeed, migration to overseas destinations, especially, the West has come to occupy such a crucial place in the praxis of religious institutions in Ghana. Because of this, we can safely say that migration to the West has become the basis for distinct forms of religious practices, where migration is the focus—Migration Religiosity (MR).

I define MR as a complex of rituals and narratives, which agents of Ghana's religions, worshippers, especially, individuals involved in migration design to link the supernatural with international migration process. What these expressions share is their focus on rituals and (or) narratives purposely for international migration. As an open-ended and unfinished process, the emergence of MR in Ghana attests to the dynamism and creative ingenuity of Ghana's religious actors. Depending on migration-related concerns, immigration policies, prospective migrants, and ritual specialists, migrants constantly incorporate new elements into MR. I demonstrate how the link between international migration and religious practice in contemporary Ghana is creating MR and how this in turn shapes the religious landscape of Ghana and its diaspora. This development is most visible on the Pentecostal religious landscape, the largest in Ghana. The Pentecostal ritual experts and clientele are taking international migration-related rituals and narratives to the centre stage in Ghana and its diaspora, particularly, in the West. By examining the Pentecostal expression of the phenomenon, this thesis will endeavour to respond to the following sets of questions:

How is international migration affecting the religious landscape in Ghana? What is the link between Ghana's religions and international migration? When and how do Ghanaians involved in international migration use religion? How do Ghanaian migrants introduce local

religious rituals and narratives into Ghanaian diaspora in the West particularly Australia? What is emerging because of the link between Ghana's international migrations and religious practices in Ghana and Australia, how is it emerging, what are its features, who are the key players, and what do prior links between religion and travel share with current practice? In what ways do the emerging practices influence the format, structure, and *modus operandi* of Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Ghana and the Australian expression of the Ghanaian diaspora? How are the Ghanaian Pentecostal migrants and their migration-centered religious practices linked to the reverse mission in Australia?

Using these sets of questions, I argue that through the use of Pentecostal Christianity in the process of Ghana's overseas migrations, ritual specialists and worshippers of the Church of Pentecost (CoP) and Power Chapel (PC) in Ghana and Australia, create a Pentecostal expression of MR to inspire, support, and enhance international migration. In the homeland, prospective migrants use MR to determine whether they must migrate or not, when to migrate, how to migrate, and how to prepare. While journeying to their destinations, travellers employ MR in guaranteeing spiritual protection, ensuring their safety, and in understanding their experiences. During their settlements and place-making in the host communities, the Pentecostal MR rituals and narratives play out in how migrants understand and respond to questions that emerge from their new conditions and experiences.

The Pentecostal MR also serves as a basis for migrants' extension of local Ghanaian Pentecostalism from the "global-South to the global-North." Their reliance on MR as they settle into their new lives in the diaspora motivates these migrants to create worshipping Cells. The Cells they initiate, furnish the ground on which Ghanaian Churches stand to launch overseas-proselytising practices or reverse missions. In the context of the Pentecostal expression of MR in the diaspora, the migrants address their spiritual, social, and cultural needs and promote the reverse mission agenda at the same time. As a result, the driving force behind the migrants' religious practices in the host land goes beyond creating and performing ethnic identity and community; they offer migrant worshippers additional benefits. MR is rather the basis for these processes and provides the context for migrants' identity, community, and place-making in the diaspora.

My second argument (which is a follow up on the first) is that the Pentecostal form of MR in contemporary Ghana and its diaspora demonstrates a Ghanaian tradition of engaging

the supernatural in migration. Before globalization provided fluid transnational networks that facilitated the migration of Ghanaian populations on a global scale, the correlation between migration and religious practices played out at the local level, in the context of migrations confined to Ghana. Local MRs developed in the context of population flows starting from northern Ghana and ending in the south. Ghanaian migrations to overseas locations in contemporary times have resulted in the exponential development of the local MRs. Moreover, the sense of importance attached to international migrations today, the increase in Ghana's population flows to overseas countries, and the engagement of diverse Ghanaian religions in international migration have led to the playing out of the local MR on the global stage.

The link between MR and Ghana's religions goes back to the 18th Century where personal security cults protected local migrants who moved between the Northern and Southern parts of Ghana.¹ Ghanaian Christianity also facilitated migration to a wider world for education, starting in the 1900.² Today, it is playing out on a global scale as Ghana's international migration increases. People's aspirations to migrate do not decrease but increase, and so this form of religiosity is becoming more and more developed. I conceive of this phenomenon as something general, and not unique to Ghana or Ghanaian religions, but pervasive in other sending countries and in other religions. There have been reports in places such as India, Nigeria, Mexico, and Haiti, and in religions such as Catholic, Hinduism, Sikhism, Vodou, and Akan traditional cults, where this religiosity plays out among migrants.³ Specific gods have acquired the status of "Visa Gods" and specific shrines and temples have attained recognition as "visa temples."⁴ Pilgrims and devotees go there to perform various forms of ritual practices for migration purposes, including purchasing of mini aeroplanes for rituals.⁵ There are also cases where migrating individuals deploy the services of priests and religious

¹ Richard P. Werbner, *Ritual Passage and Sacred Journey: The Process and Organization of Religions Movement*, Smithsonian Series in Ethnographic Inquiry (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989c), 86.

² Mirjam de Bruijn, Han Van Dijk and Rijk Van Dijk, *Cultures of Travel: Fulbe Pastoralists in Central Mali and Pentecostalism in Mali and Ghana*, ed. Mirjam de Bruijn, Rijk van Dijk and Dick Feoken, *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 85.

³ Vauhini Vara, "Divine Intervention? Indians Seek Help from the Visa God; Priest Says Prayers May Aid Those Trying to Enter U.S.A," 2007; Helen Rose and Janet Saltzmann Chafetz Ebaugh, ed. *Religion across Borders* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002); CNN Staff, "Praying at the Visa Temple in Hyderabad," CNN. <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/26/travel/india-temple-visas-hindu/>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-33161672> (Accessed on 24/08/16).

⁴ Ibid.

organizations in the process of migration.⁶ This an Pentecostal expressions, and all my examples are from Ghana and its Australian diaspora. This study is also not a comparative thesis. However, I see the phenomenon broader, which is why I use the term (MR) more broadly. It would be ambitious to provide a comparative investigation of the phenomenon in other religions such as Islam in Ghana, owing to the complex diversities of the context.

1.2 Literature Review and Contribution of the Study

I review in this section, the current literature on religion and international migration. I identify gaps in the literature and describe how this study intends to contribute to existing knowledge. I also identify some findings and theoretical ideas in the current literature and show how this study builds on these findings and conceptual ideas. I have organized the literature review under these themes: religion (religiosity) in the process of migration, Ghana's Pentecostal practices and migration, and Ghana's Pentecostal practices in the diaspora.

1.2.1 Pentecostalism and international migration

A considerable portion of research on the link between religiosity and international migration focuses on how international migration affects the religious participation of the persons involved and how religion affects the migration process.⁷ The literature shows that religious participation changes because of such migration.⁸ For example, Mariya Aleksynka and Barry R. Chiswick examined differences in religious practices of immigrants in Europe.⁹ Their study found that the religiosity of immigrants was higher, even among those without religious affiliations; they also found that characteristics of the country of origin and destination—

⁶ Jacqueline Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009); Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants' Use of Religion in the Migration Process," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 4 (2003); Terry Rey, and Stepick, Alex T., *Crossing the Water and Keeping the Faith : Haitian Religion in Miami* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); Girish Daswani, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-) Mobility," in *Travelling Spirits, Migrants, Markets, and Moralities*, ed. Kristine Krause and Gertrud Huewelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁷ Mariya Aleksynska, and Barry Chiswick, "Religiosity and Migration: Travel into One's Self Versus Travel across Cultures," in *IDEAS Working Paper Series* (RePEc, 2011); Phillip Connor, "Balm for the Soul: Immigrant Religion and Emotional Well-Being," *International Migration Review* 50, no. 2 (2012); "The Impact of the International Migratory Event on Immigrant Religious Participation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 2 (2008).

⁸ Christian Smith, Sikkink, David, and Bailey, Jason, "Devotion in Dixie and Beyond: A Test of the "Shibley Thesis" on the Effects of Regional Origin and Migration on Individual Religiosity," *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 3 (1998).

⁹ Aleksynska.

characteristics such as religious freedom, religious attitudes, and societal attitude—are significant predictors of migrants' religiosity. Another set of literature has focused on how the presence of immigrant religions is changing the local religious landscape—notably, with respect to the shape of Christianity in the U.S.A.¹⁰ While such dynamics are relevant for understanding migrants' religiosity in the present study, they are not the primary focus. Ghanaian migrants are clearly changing the face of Christianity in their lands of destination, but the thesis does not seek to map those wider contours. Nor does it seek to account for predictors' migrant religiosity, but rather to consider in detail ways that prospective and actual migrants participate in religion and the forms of religions they engage with.

The growing literature on Pentecostalism and migration, and African international migration and religion are particularly relevant to the present thesis, and highlights a number of factors of significance. Recent studies on Pentecostalism, for example, have highlighted the globalisation of African and Latin American Pentecostal movements disrupt notions that present the global flow of Pentecostalism as moving primarily from the “West to the rest” of the world, but rather from the rest to the West.¹¹ In relation to Pentecostalism in Canada, Nèstor Medina demonstrates that one element in the success of Pentecostalism in Canada relates to the ability to travel, adapt, and change according to new conditions and cultures. He proposes that immigration contributes to the present reconfiguration of Pentecostalism in Canada.¹²

With specific emphasis on African international migrations and religiosity, researchers have shown how global population flows shape the theology and practices of Pentecostal Churches in Africa and its diaspora.¹³ Biri Kudzai has examined the impact of world population flows on the theology and practices of the Zimbabwean Assemblies of God

¹⁰ For example, Jacob K. Olupona, and Regina Gemignani, ed. *African Immigrant Religions in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

¹¹ Michael Wilkinson, and Ebrary, Inc., ed. *Global Pentecostal Movements : Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, vol. 14, International Studies in Religion and Society (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

¹² Nestor Medina, "Hybridity, Migration, and Transnational Relations: Rethinking Canadian Pentecostalism from a Latina/O Perspective," in *Global Pentecostal Movements : Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, ed. Michael Wilkinson, and Ebrary, Inc. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 214.

¹³ Kudzai Biri, "Migration, Transnationalism and the Shaping of Zimbabwean Pentecostal Spirituality," *African Diaspora* 7, no. 1 (2014); Daswani; Mirjam de Bruijn, J.W.M. Djik, and R.A. Van Djik, eds., *Cultures of Travel: Fulbe Pastoralists in Central Mali and in Ghana*, Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement on Africa and Beyond (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

(ZAOGA), one of the largest and oldest Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe.¹⁴ Kudzai asserts that ZAOGA's teachings encouraged emigration during the period of Zimbabwean socio-economic and political crises. Nevertheless, the teachings emphasized that departure was a temporary sojourn. She notes how ZAOGA stressed the moral importance of migrant investment in the homeland.¹⁵ She maintains that migrants used such teachings to produce a theology that viewed Zimbabwe as superior to the foreign countries where their diasporic communities have grown.¹⁶ Studies like these show that migrants create theologies that influence their religious practices, and shape their interpretation of the migration process. This thesis generally supports this finding. I suggest that the processes Kudzai describes are part of the complex of religious practices, narratives, and teachings that I refer to as MR.

In the thesis, I offer a more comprehensive account of this religiosity. I show how leaders of Ghanaian Pentecostalism create this religiosity in response to specific needs prospective migrants and migrants have articulated. I show how MR influences how migrants view the process of their migration in its various stages. One of the key contributions of my MR approach to the current research is that it offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding the link between religion and international migration in Africa. This link is more complex than current researchers have presented. Prospective migrants and migrants demand specific theologies and ritual practices. Ritual agents tailor their teachings and rituals to meet these demands. The religiosity also "makes migrants connections" with their homelands possible by facilitating itinerary preaching and the participation of migrants in transnational ritual practices either physically or via modern electronic media. The religiosity also helps migrants in dealing with their dislocations in the host land. The religiosity is the basis for migrants' establishment of African religions' reverse missions. Thus, as a framework, MR captures the link between religion and international migration in ways that enable us to understand its complexity.

1.2.2 Ghana's Pentecostal practices and overseas migration

With particular attention to the Ghanaian situation, the literature focuses on how Ghana's international migrations produce "internationalizing" aspirations of the Ghanaian Pentecostal

¹⁴ Biri, 139-64.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

institutions.¹⁷ According to Paul Gifford, from the 1970s, a period when Ghana experienced mass population migrations to overseas destinations in the West, Ghanaian Pentecostalism has had an international outlook and image in its symbolism and activities.¹⁸ The research show how local Ghanaian Pentecostals establish out-posts especially in Western Europe and America “in an active and swift manner,” which have become conduits for “extensive exchange and flow of persons and materials to and from Ghana.”¹⁹ More importantly, research shows how some of these Pentecostals offer worshippers promises of “religiously-inspired access to the West.”²⁰ Terms such as international and global which these churches have added to their names identify them to worshippers, as channels to the West.²¹

Additionally, churches frame and popularize narratives and teachings that encourage migrations to the West.²² Rijk van Dijk writes about how Ghana’s Pentecostal churches created for their members a moral understanding of international migration.²³ As a demonstration of this, Girish Daswani notes the Pentecostal narratives that emerged in Ghana between the late 1980s and 1990s.²⁴ The narratives state that, “it is in ‘the West’ that a person achieves God’s promise of prosperity and success.”²⁵ Daswani indicates further that in the Pentecostal teachings, international migration has become part of God’s scheme for

¹⁷ Harri Englund, “Christian Independency and Global Membership: Pentecostal Extraversion in Malawi,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 1 (2003); Van Dijk, Rijk A., “Time and Transcultural Technologies of the Self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora,” in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and in Latin America*, ed. Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Afe Adogame, “Transnational Migration and Pentecostalism in Europe,” *PentecoStudies* 9, no. 1 (2010); Matthews A. Ojo, “Reverse Mission,” in *Encyclopaedia of Missions and Missionaries*, ed. Jonathan Bonk (New York: Routledge, 2007); Paul Gifford, “Ghana’s Charismatic Churches,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 24, no. 3 (1994); Gerrie Ter Haar, “Standing up for Jesus: A Survey of New Developments in Christianity in Ghana,” *Exchange* 23, no. 3 (1994); Margaret. Peil and K. A. Opoku, “The Development and Practice of Religion in an Accra Suburb,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 24, no. 3 (1994).

¹⁹ Rijk A. van Dijk, “From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora,” *ibid.* 27, no. 2 (1997): 139; Daswani, 67-82.

²⁰ Charles A. Asare, *Miracles, Healings, Signs and Wonders* (Accra: Power Publishers, 1992); Mensah A. Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia: A Biblical Revelation on God’s Purpose for the Black Race* (Accra: Altar International, 1992).

²¹ Asare; Otabil.

²² Girish Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, ed. Michael Lambek (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 84-105.

²³ van Dijk, 139.

²⁴ Girish Daswani, “Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London,” *ibid.* 40, no. 4 (2010); Emmanuel Acheampong, “Africans in the Diaspora: The Diaspora in Africa,” *African Affairs* 99 (2000).

²⁵ Daswani, “Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London,” 67.

worshippers that He (God) had chosen to give "breakthroughs" in the life of the faithful.²⁶ "Breakthrough" is the ability God gives to the faithful Christian to defeat confining structures and to reach the next level of success.²⁷ Van Dijk also identifies two aspects of the Pentecostal teachings on international migration. The first is a "sending discourse" which asserts that going through Pentecostal prayer rituals should be a *sine qua non* for prospective migrants.²⁸ The second teaching is the "receiving discourse," which encourages migrants to go through a set of welcoming rituals in a sister Pentecostal church in the West.²⁹ The scholars show that because these Pentecostal institutions aspire to internationalize, they create beliefs and practices to inspire access to the West. What we see in the literature is a deliberate creation of narratives to promote understandings of international migration and offer guidelines for persons involved in it. I suggest that this is an indispensable aspect of MR. I build on the leads of these scholars to explore the narratives of international migration that prevail in the CoP. However, I show that these narratives are not always from top to down. I will demonstrate how the individual worshippers are not passive recipients of the Church's narratives and teachings; they participate in the creation of the narratives and contest some of the narratives in their bid to create meanings for their individual migration experiences. At the grassroots, laity also produces their migration narratives (theologies) by offering interpretations of what the Church teaches them.

Scholars such as Mirjam de Bruijn also note how "specific forms of culture act to bring about forms of mobility in Ghana."³⁰ They show that part of this culture is how Ghanaian Pentecostals "construct and almost literally produce cultural forms and means for dealing with everyday problems of (overseas) mobility and the successes and failures in this domain."³¹ Bruijn et al, demonstrate the phenomenon by describing Ghanaian Pentecostal prayer camps. They explain that members of the camps perceive "migration as a spiritual

²⁶ Ibid., 67-69.

²⁷ Boris Nieswand, "'Breaking through' Charismatic Christianity, Temporal Disjunction and the Paradox of Migration," in *Meeting of the International Advisory Board of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology* (Saale: Institute for Social Anthropology, 2006), 5.

²⁸ van Dijk, 142-43.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mirjam de Bruijn, Han Van Dijk, and Rijk Van Dijk, *Cultures of Travel: Fulbe Pastoralists in Central Mali and Pentecostalism in Mali and Ghana*, ed. Mirjam de Bruijn, Rijk van Dijk and Dick Feoken, *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 64.

³¹ Ibid., 64.

problem,” thus; there are “barriers” or “spiritual blockages” to overcome.³² The authors add that in the prayer camps there is the notion that “travel problems” required special prayers.³³ They note how ritual experts pray for travel documents and for persons with travel ambitions “to strengthen their spiritual powers for 'travel breakthroughs.'”³⁴

The studies show that the Pentecostal prayer camps also attribute people's migration challenges to the demonic agency; thus, the camps enlisting the powers of the Holy Spirit, the blood of Jesus, and the name of Jesus, through rituals, as antidotes to these challenges.³⁵ Other scholars such as Han Van Dijk have described similar practices in their work.³⁶ Daswani also notes how key ritual specialists who perform rituals for prospective migrants to enable them to obtain travel visas and achieve their ambitions overseas; include those who sometimes never travel overseas, themselves.³⁷ The literature underscores the important place rituals occupy in MR. International migration has provided the basis for the construction of ritual forms or culture. I offer comprehensive “accounts of Pentecostal rituals, people practice” as they prepare for the journey, while in transit, and as they settle in Australia. One finding I consider a major contribution to literature is that sometimes the rituals of the churches trigger migrations. During the rituals, worshippers receive revelations of God’s plan for them to travel. Only then do they initiate the migration process.

Out of Ghana’s population of 27 million, 28.3% are Pentecostals.³⁸ More so, Daswani’s and van Dijk’s works demonstrate that “international migration is heavily ‘pentecostalized’ in Ghana.” This means there is Pentecostal influence in the process. More importantly, they provide ideas that specific practices have become essential to the Pentecostals in Ghanaian migrations. Although the rituals and narratives are part of the Pentecostal practices, van Dijk indicates that Pentecostals design specific forms of ritual practices for the purpose of international travels. Van Dijk and Daswani also show that because these Pentecostal institutions aspire to internationalize, they create practices to inspire access to the West. In

³² Ibid., 74.

³³ Ibid., 75.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ van Dijk, 76; Daswani, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-) Mobility,” 75.

³⁶ Han van Dijk, Kiky van Til and Dick Foeken, *Population Mobility in Africa: An Overview*, ed. Rijk van Dijk and Dick Foeken Mirgam de Bruijn, *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 75; Daswani, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-) Mobility,” 67-78.

³⁷ “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-) Mobility,” 70-76.

³⁸ Ghana Statistical Service, “2010-Ghana Population and Housing Census: Summary Report of Final Results,” ed. Government of Ghana (Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

the Chapters that follow, especially Chapter Three, I will establish that ritual practice is part of Ghana's Pentecostal MR. I will also establish that institutions' overseas aspirations inspire worshippers' own travel ambitions and serve as motivations in the migration process. It is plausible to assume that Pentecostalism has the most influence on the process of international migration in Ghana because the majority of Ghanaians are Pentecostals. Nevertheless, my research in Ghana uncovered also the influence of indigenous religious beliefs and practices in international migration.

1.2.3 Ghana's Pentecostal Practices in the Diaspora

Ghanaian Pentecostal practices in the diaspora have received scholarly attention.³⁹ The literature has focused on how the migrant churches design elaborate rituals to provide a sense of identity, security, and protection for members.⁴⁰ Afe Adogame describes such rituals as a package of "deliverance, healing, prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving practices, which the churches intend to annihilate Satan evil machinations and 'spiritual terrorist attacks' such as ill-health, death, and emotional stress."⁴¹ Through the rituals, the churches demonstrate their power over agents of supernatural harm in the diaspora. This means that there is a continuation of African Pentecostal 'ritual practices in the diaspora.' I refer to this diasporic extension of local Pentecostal practices as the diaspora portion of MR or MR in post-migration. One contribution of this study lies in its focus not only on the continuities in ritual practices of Pentecostals in post-migration but also on the adaptations or innovations migrant churches make in response to emerging questions in post-migration.

A strong theme in the current literature is how conditions of life in the diaspora impose changes in African Pentecostal teachings and narratives. Because African Pentecostal teachings and narratives are essential in constructing positive African migrants' self-perceptions to counter negative images of these migrants in host communities in the West, agents and worshippers must sometimes construct new perceptions. Daswani says that some CoP members in Europe see themselves as "citizens of heaven," while others describe

³⁹ Opoku Onyinah, "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," *Pneuma* 26, no. 2 (2004); Jeanne Rey, "Mermaids and Spirit Spouses: Ritual as Technologies of Gender in Transnational African Pentecostal Spaces," *Religion and Gender* 3, no. 1 (2013): 60-75.

⁴⁰ Afe Adogame, "Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare: The Public Face of Aladura in Diaspora," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 34, no. 4 (2004b): 505.

⁴¹ *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 93-95.

themselves as “African missionaries who are mandated to bring the fire of Christianity back to Europe.”⁴²

Other changes in perception enable African churches to fit into the religious ethos of the host community. Daswani also notes how the CoP finds the talk of evil spirits and witchcraft as not culturally appropriate in the U.K. because “it distracts members from the true source of salvation and prevents members from bringing non-Africans to the Church.”⁴³ Adogame also explains that there is a strong emphasis on “hope and empowerment” in the theological teachings of African churches in the diaspora in Europe.⁴⁴ He explains, “African migrants weave narratives partly between and betwixt themes of survival, security, identity, adaptation, and mobility.”⁴⁵ He indicates that such teachings are verbal contestations of the strict immigration laws and policies against these migrants in Europe.⁴⁶ The findings offer important leads in this study. I describe post-migration narratives of the CoP, showing how they reflect the Church’s attempts to justify its missionizing activities, fit in with the Australian religious ethos, accommodate non-African members, and construct a new and more positive sense of identity for place-making for worshippers.

Nevertheless, studies have not explored the link between the pre-migratory narratives, migratory, and those in the new home. Yet, there is evidence that the migrants link diaspora narratives to those prior to migration and the migration itself. The study demonstrates how worshippers link religious practices in the settling process to those they created prior to migration and during the journeys to Australia. Although research shows African Pentecostal practices in Europe and the U.S.A., it is yet to present the Australian portion of the experience. Nevertheless, there is evidence of the growing presence and impact of the African migrants and their Pentecostal practices in Australia.⁴⁷ The thesis is the first to venture into the Australian portion of (African) Ghanaian (religious) Pentecostal

⁴² Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 181-82.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴⁴ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 15-37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Franklin Obeng-Odoom, “The Ghana House in Australia: An Innovation by Migrants?,” *GBER* 8, no. 1 (2013): 37-44; Virginia Mapedzahama and Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo, “Negotiating Diasporic Black African Existence in Australia: A Reflexive Analysis,” *Australasian Review of African Studies* 34, no. 1 (2013): 61-81.

experience. It is also the first to explore comprehensively, Pentecostal practices in African migration process.

Furthermore, the thesis prompts us to revisit the reverse mission paradigm. Underlying the paradigm is the notion that African churches are making Western societies their proselytizing fields and targeting Western membership, or changing the normal course of missionizing (from the global North to the global South).⁴⁸ Scholars show how the growing pace of international migration, the technological revolution in the media, and travelling have generated the mobility, development, and expansion of African religions on the continent and across the globe.⁴⁹ Adogame notes how "African-derived religions are making inroads, furthering their self-assertion into Europe, the Americas, and Asia."⁵⁰ However, other scholars such as Aderemi B. Adedibu have contested the reverse mission idea, arguing that the idea is contestable because these churches are essentially migrant churches or "migrant sanctuaries," and not missions.⁵¹ The position of this study is that migrants' post-migration MR plays crucial roles in the emergence of African "reverse missions or migrants' sanctuaries." Ghanaian migrants extend MR into Australia because they continue to rely on it. This study offers comprehensive accounts of how migrants' MR in the CoPS and PCM play roles that are pivotal to the success of the reverse missions or sanctuaries of these Pentecostal traditions.

Finally, the study hopes to demonstrate is how the cosmology of "religiously protected travelling" in Ghana's traditional religions has shaped contemporary notions of seeking religious protection and direction for international migrations to the West.⁵² Scholars note that Ghana's traditional religions have had "cosmologies of religiously protected travels" in Ghana's migration history.⁵³ Jane Parish identifies over 30 anti-witchcraft shrines, a number of 'personal security shrines' carried from Ghana to the West (U.S.A., France,

⁴⁸ Jehu J. Hanciles, "Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-First-Century Church," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27, no. 4 (2003): 146; "Migrants as Missionaries, Missionaries as Outsiders: Reflections on African Christian Presence in Western Societies," *Mission Studies* 30, no. 1 (2013): 64-85; Richard. Burgess, "Bringing Back the Gospel: Reverse Mission among Nigerian Pentecostals in Britain," *Journal of Religion in Europe* 4, no. 3 (2011): 429-49; Ojo, 380-82.

⁴⁹ Afe Adogame, *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora : Imagining the Religious Other*, ed. Afe Adogame, *Minority Religions and Spiritual Movements* (London: Ashgate, 2014); Ojo; Burgess.

⁵⁰ Adogame, *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora : Imagining the Religious Other*.

⁵¹ Babatunde Aderemi Adedibu, "Reverse Mission or Migrant Sanctuaries? Migration, Symbolic Mapping, and Missionary Challenges of Britain's Black Majority Churches," *Pneuma* 35, no. 3 (2013): 407.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ de Bruijn, 78-83.

Holland, and the U.K.) in researches she conducted between the 1990s and 2013.⁵⁴ She shows that most of the shrines were carried over by ritual agents, mainly migrants and itinerant ritual experts) for their protection and those of other migrants against witchcraft, believed to prevent the migrants from attaining their goals in the West.⁵⁵ The literature demonstrates that the use of religion in the migration process (MR) is not limited to one religious group in Ghana. In my Chapter Two, I explore how this practice is widespread within Ghana's religious field. I show however, that the practice is particular to the religious traditions.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversations on the link between African international migrations and religions in general. Existing studies have focused attention on the important roles of religion in such migrations and the roles migration also play in enabling religions to cross national borders.⁵⁶ A major contribution of this study lies in its use of MR as a concept to capture the complex ways in which the link between religion and international migration plays out in Ghana. MR offers a new way of looking at the link. Using MR as a concept provides us with advantages over the approaches in which scholars describe the participation of migrants in religious activities in some stages of the process. The idea of MR suggests that the link is more complex. MR enables us to see how religious agents in Ghana have constructed distinct international migration-centred religious forms.

Using MR as a framework allows us to see how migrants use religious rituals and teachings throughout, how they root this in the diaspora, how religious agents construct international migration theology, and the ways religion becomes a place-making tool in the diaspora. I present the practices of two Pentecostal churches Ghanaian migrants use in the stages of their migrations to Australia to demonstrate how religion and international migration in post-colonial and post-modern Africa are establishing the Pentecostal form of

⁵⁴ Jane Parish, "Circumventing Uncertainty in the Moral Economy: West African Shrines in Europe, Witchcraft and Secret Gambling," *African Diaspora* 3, no. 1 (2010): 76-92; "Social Suffering and Anxiety: Deciphering Coughs and Colds at Akan Anti-Witchcraft Shrines in Paris," *Anthropology & Medicine* 18, no. 3 (2011): 303-13.

⁵⁵ "Social Suffering and Anxiety: Deciphering Coughs and Colds at Akan Anti-Witchcraft Shrines in Paris."; "West African Witchcraft, Wealth and Moral Decay in New York City," *Ethnography* 12, no. 2 (2011); "Chasing Celebrity: Akan Witchcraft and New York City," *Ethnos* 78, no. 2 (2013); "Circumventing Uncertainty in the Moral Economy: West African Shrines in Europe, Witchcraft and Secret Gambling."; "Antiwitchcraft Shrines among the Akan: Possession and the Gathering of Knowledge," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (2003).

⁵⁶ Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants' Use of Religion in the Migration Process," *International Migration Review* 1 (2003): 23.

MR. The study demonstrates clearly how MR in the host community, evolve into reverse missions. This study contributes to our understanding of the reverse mission. The accounts of migrants' roles in the current research on the reverse mission are very cursory.

The thesis also provides new ways of looking at "grassroots narratives" as a crucial process in international migrations. It also draws attention to the importance of itinerant ritual experts, those based in Ghana, and resident in the diaspora in the process. The ritual experts maintain and connect ideas, rituals, and paraphernalia of MR between the homeland and the host land. In this section, I examined literature that informed the study and the gaps that this thesis hopes to fill. In the next section, I discuss the theoretical considerations and contributions of the thesis.

1.3 Theoretical Considerations

I draw from two main useful theoretical models that I consider relevant for shaping the themes that emerged in the study. The themes include what I make of the MR ritual culture, the ritual language, and MR narratives as "actively doing something." The selected theorists are Benjamin Ray and Corrine Squire.

1.3.1 Ritual language as "Performative Utterances"

The rituals described in the thesis are activities; gestures, words, as well as objects used in religious spaces and designed to "influence the pre-natural (God) on behalf of the actors' goals and interests."⁵⁷ The definition helps us to understand what we mean by rituals as I observed in the PCK and PCM. I view the ritual activities of the Churches as the words of prophecies, actions, and objects used for influencing pre-natural powers in the name and blood of Jesus; the power and the fire of the Holy Spirit; and the power of the divine to facilitate international migration endeavours for prospective migrants and the settling concerns of migrant members in Australia. The words of prophecies relate to the performative act of prophesying as the ritual experts and worshippers consider the words as rituals. The ritual experts who are the hub of the travel rituals are the mediators between the supernatural and the congregation for the facilitation of the migration processes. I also view the Pentecostal rituals as borrowed from existing Pentecostal and traditional worldviews,

⁵⁷ Victor W. Turner, "Symbols in African Ritual," 179, no. 4078 (1973); Mathieu Deflem, "Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 1 (1991).

configured, and are variants of older ritual practices. The Churches take ritual configurations from existing or older travel ritual formats to meet new travel situations.

Important to the Power Chapel in Kumasi (PCK) and the Power Chapel in Melbourne's (PCM) ritual processes is the feature of their ritual language in the form of prophecies and words of prayer. The ritual language at the PCK and the PCM is in English, but interpreted into a local (Twi) language for local members. According to the leadership of the Church, the rituals are not for only Ghanaians; the audience comes from different African and overseas countries, they speak different languages. Thus, English has become the common denominator for many of them. It also shows the Church's aspiration to be international and attract international audience.

I draw on Benjamin Ray's understandings of the "performative utterance" to show how PCK and PCM worshippers understand the "ritual language as that which does things or performs—performative utterance."⁵⁸ According to Benjamin Ray, the concept emanates from J.L. Austin's observation that some utterances do not describe, report, or make true or false statements.⁵⁹ Rather, the "utterances do something."⁶⁰ Accordingly, in his attempt to explain the nature of ritual language in societies, Austin develops the concept into a more general theory of "illocutionary forces."⁶¹ He develops a threefold classification of speech acts under three categories: "the *locutionary* act of saying something with a certain sense and reference; the *illocutionary* act of doing something in the act of saying something; and lastly the *perlocutionary* act of accomplishing something by the act of saying something."⁶² The action involved in *illocutionary* act is a "conventional act performed in saying the utterance and constitutes the meaning of the utterance, whereas the action involved in the *perlocutionary* acts is the consequence(s) of saying the utterance."⁶³

Benjamin Ray deploys the "performative utterance" concept in his study of rituals between the Dogon and Dinka in Africa. Ray demonstrates that the "performative utterance" approach enables us to see the instrumentality of "ritual language as the mechanism of

⁵⁸ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Massachusetts: Cambridge, 1962), 1-38.

⁵⁹ Benjamin C. Ray, "Performative Utterances in African Rituals," *History of Religions* 13, no. 1 (1973): 16-35.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Austin, 117.

⁶² Ray, 17; Austin, 117-19.

⁶³ Ray.

rituals.”⁶⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu indicates the usefulness of performative utterance for understanding Pentecostal anointing rituals in Ghanaian Pentecostalism.⁶⁵ He explains, “Words are widely believed to have a *performative effect* in the ritual culture of Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity.”⁶⁶ Following Ray and Asamoah-Gyadu, I will build on the concept to demonstrate in the thesis that, words in the form of prophecies, spoken during the PCK and PCM’s MR rituals “do something”; they create moods, meanings, behaviours, actions, and motivation to inform, bolster, support, and facilitate international migration process. More importantly, I view the prophecies as that which act what it says, and not merely as expressive and symbolic everyday language.

1.3.2 “Narratives do things”: Corinne Squire

The thesis also presents narrative construction as part of the Pentecostal expression of MR. I view the narrative construction, broadly, as a representation of spoken or written texts that give an account of an experience, event, action or series of either.⁶⁷ The narratives in this thesis represent oral stories of both aspiring and actual migrants’ experiences in the stages of their migration process.⁶⁸ The narratives are collectively a “meta-narrative; story about a stories,” and an explanation of the individual stories gathered as data.⁶⁹ I categorize the individual narratives into themes and in a form of composite stories to give structure to the pieces of narratives individuals shared with me. As a result, the themes will not necessarily be a chronology of individual migration stories, but a set of relationships that will bring out individual understandings of the migration experiences in the context of thesis’ arguments and questions. The individual narratives or stories that the thesis presents were shared as personal first-person narratives or stories about their migration experiences and the use of religion.

As a theoretical frame, I present the narratives in the thesis also as having the capacity to do things; to motivate, bolster, inform, and enable migration processes. Corinne Squire theorizes that “rather than been understood as representing reality, we should see narratives

⁶⁴ Thomas Lawson, “Ritual as Language,” *Religion* 6, no. 2 (1976): 130.

⁶⁵ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘Unction to Function’: Reinventing the Oil of Influence in African Pentecostalism,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 2 (2005): 244.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ B. Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research* (London: SAGE, 2004), 17; Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

⁶⁸ Christine Bold, *What Is Narrative: Using Narrative in Research*, Research Methods (London: SAGE, 2013), 13-14.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

as productive: narratives do things; they constitute realities; and shape the social rather than been determined by it.”⁷⁰ Squire picks up the thread of relationship between power, discourse, and history and “offers a Foucauldian approach for using narratives to re-imagine history and investigate the relationship between narrative, subjectivity, and power.”⁷¹ She identifies narratives as carrying twofold functioning: first as “technologies of power” which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends.⁷² The second is an “objectivizing of the self,” or *technologies of the self*, which is an active practice of self-formation.⁷³

I draw on Squire's understandings of narratives to demonstrate that the CoP and CoPS ‘grassroots narratives of international migrations have the capacity to do something; they bolster, inform, facilitate, and justify the travel and settling processes of my interlocutors. Her concept of the *technologies of the self*, which is an active practice of self-formation via narratives, is helpful in understanding how grassroots narratives enable self-formation for the prospective migrants and migrant members of the Churches. The narratives in this context provide new understandings for members concerning themselves, not as ordinary travellers or migrants, but those on divine assignments and as progenitors of Australia's end-time revival. The theoretical considerations of the thesis will help us to understand how the religious practices (MR rituals and narratives) in the process of international migration are productive or “performative” and are thus, practices designed to attract the supernatural to aid in the travel processes; make meaning of, and support the migration process.

1.4 Research Methodology

In the sections that follow, I describe the geographical setting of the study, the methods, and instruments used for collecting the primary data for the thesis. I also highlight how I used the methods and instruments to collect the data that went into the writing of the thesis.

1.4.1 Geographical Setting of the Study

I conducted this multi-site research in Ghana and Australia. I selected, visited, and examined two Pentecostal churches in Ghana that have extensions in Australia. The churches are the

⁷⁰ Corinne Squire, *From Experience-Centered and Culturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative*, ed. Maria Taboukou, Molly Andrews, and Corinne Squire, *Doing Narrative Research* (New York: SAGE, 2008), 15.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 93.

⁷³ Ibid.; *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Michel Foucault, et al. (Amherst: Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 18.

PCK in Kumasi and the CoP in Accra. Kumasi is a city located in the Ashanti region of Ghana and it is the largest metropolitan city in Ghana.⁷⁴ The PCK (headquarters) site that I visited is located at the IPT Junction in Asuoyeboah, a suburb in Kumasi.⁷⁵ The other site (the CoP) I visited in Ghana is in Accra. As the capital city of Ghana, Accra is the second populous metropolitan city in Ghana.⁷⁶ The city is the administrative and economic hub of Ghana.⁷⁷ Figure 1 shows a picture of the map of Ghana with arrows indicating the sites I visited for data collection.



Figure 1. The map shows the research locations in Ghana

The CoP's site in Ghana consisted of the Darkuman District Assembly (Central Chapel) and the Paradise Prayer Centre (PPC) at Dansoman. I also visited the headquarters of the CoP located in Labadi to interview the Chairman of the Church. The research sites in Australia were the PCM in Springvale (Melbourne) and the CoPS in Brisbane (Sydney). Melbourne, which was the second site I visited in Australia, is the capital and the populous city of the Australian state of Victoria. It is also the second populous city in Australia and located in Australia's east

⁷⁴ Johnson P. and Jr. David, "Kumasi, Ghana," in *Encyclopedia of Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁷⁵ IPT is the centre for Intermittent Preventive Treatment of Malaria in Kumasi.

⁷⁶ Britannica Online Academic Edition, "Accra," (2015); "Accra (Ghana)," in *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

coast.⁷⁸ In Melbourne, I visited the Reservoir Assembly of the CoP to interview some of the founders of the CoPS in Sydney who had relocated to Melbourne. Figure 2 shows the geographical sites I visited in Australia for the data collection.



Figure 2. The Map shows the Research locations (cities) in Australia

1.4.2 Description of Sampling Method

The following describes the methods used to select the sites and participants for the thesis' data collection.

1.4.2a Purposive Sampling

"Purposive sampling," is a sampling method for selecting specific groups or typical places in a sample.⁷⁹ I used this method as the criteria to select the research sites (Pentecostal Churches-The Church of Pentecost and the Power Chapel) in Ghana and Australia. The following were the criteria for selecting the Churches: They were Pentecostal churches that Ghanaians founded with their headquarters in Ghana and extensions in Australia; they had specially designed ritual practices for enhancing, inspiring, and bolstering international migrations; or had particular narratives (theologies, teachings, and doctrines) that play crucial roles in international migration process. The criteria were in line with the purpose of the

⁷⁸ <http://stat.abs.gov.au/itt/r.jsp?databyregion>. Accessed 13/05/2015.

⁷⁹ Lisa M. Given, "Purposive Sampling," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Alberta, Canada: SAGE, 2008).

thesis and enabled me to narrow my sample size and sites visited. I used the purposive sampling procedure for flexibility to select each sample element purposively. Although there were other religious groups that could have suited the goals of the study, I purposively selected the Churches because of their unique positions with regard the study and the popularity of their practices among other Pentecostals.⁸⁰

1.4.2b Snowball Sampling

In addition to the purposive sampling method for selecting the religious sites, I selected some participants at the sites using the snowball sampling technique. The “snowball (chain) sampling procedure uses a small pool of initial key persons to link with other participants who meet the eligibility criteria for research data collection.”⁸¹ It is a method for locating information-rich key informants.⁸² The snowball sample grows as new information about prospective informants is accumulated and until the needed sample size is achieved.”⁸³ The technique was particularly useful for collecting data at the Church of Pentecost in Ghana and Australia. The method enabled me to ask questions such as, “Can you suggest or provide information on any of your members who would share their migration aspirations and experiences?” The approach also enabled me to identify the interlocutors who were best suited for the study but not easily identified by an outsider. This was because the narratives float among members with similar migration concerns.⁸⁴

It was easier to use the snowball approach for quicker access to such individuals within the period of data collection. Members with travel projects and problems were not easily identifiable. Besides, I was interested in the narratives at the grassroots level (laity) of the Church. I was able to identify the interviewees after speaking to key persons of the Church. The key persons also directed me to the Paradise Prayer Centre (PPC) and other prayer camps where such narratives prevailed. According to the key persons, such interlocutors normally spent time ‘waiting on the Lord’ at the prayer centres.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Rafael J. and Russell K. Schutt Engel, *The Practice of Research in Social Work*, 3 ed. (London: SAGE, 2013); R.K. Schutt, "The Practice of Research in Social Work," *Reference and Research Book News* 24, no. 2 (2006): 56.

⁸¹ Russell H. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Fourth ed., Eddy Covariance Flux Measurements (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 146-69; M. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (California: SAGE, 1990).

⁸² Bernard.

⁸³ Patton, 236.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ ‘Waiting on the Lord’ is a term for prayer and fasting among these Pentecostals.

Similarly, I used the snowball technique at the Power Chapel in Kumasi (PCK), Ghana. I was interested in the members who actively participated in the Church's MR rituals for their migration endeavours or those of their relatives, and so, I asked the founder, leader, and prophet of the PCK (Victor Kusi-Boateng), his special assistants, and 'spiritual sons' to connect me to such members. The leaders knew such individuals because as the study will show, these individuals shared their migration concerns, projects, and challenges with the leaders (ritual experts).

In Australia, I also used the snowball method to locate migrant members who were members of the Churches prior the journeys to Australia and engaged in the churches' MR practices for the journeys and their settling processes. I was especially interested in the migrants who founded the Churches in the diaspora. I needed key persons who would be able to help locate these information-rich key participants. It was also because the Churches were comprised of first and second-generation Ghanaian migrants, other African migrants, and other nationals. I needed to narrow my interlocutors to Ghanaian migrant members. Although the snowball technique was useful in locating the participants, it was not always easy for the key persons to give out the names of their members. I had to be persuasive and persistent before they would link me up to interviewees.

Nevertheless, I used the simple random sampling method for accessing participants at some point in the PCK. The principle of the simple random sampling is that "every member of the congregation has the same probability of being chosen as an interviewee."⁸⁶ I used the simple random sampling during the Church's "Token of passport" rituals. The audience of the rituals included numbers of the prospective migrants, and so it was easy to use the simple random sampling method to complement the snowball method. In all, I had 81 respondents in Ghana and Australia, of which 72 were valid and met the criteria required for the thesis. Thus, the sample size was 72. In Ghana, there were 42 participants, with 22 from the PCK and 20 from the CoP. In Australia, there were 30 Ghana-born Australian participants, fifteen from each Church. The participants included the leaders of the Churches in Ghana and Australia.

1.4.3 Sources and Methods for data Collection

To capture detailed accounts of the rituals, narratives, and migration experiences of my interlocutors before their migration, during the migration, and the settling process in

⁸⁶ Bernard, 146-69.

Australia, I adopted a qualitative method for collecting data for the thesis.⁸⁷ I selected the method to gather data concerning the migration related religious practices and the history of the PCK and CoP and their diaspora extensions in Australia. With the qualitative approach, I deployed phenomenology and ethnography to collect data. Phenomenology was the method for describing MR “phenomenon as presented” in the activities and practices of the Churches.⁸⁸ I also used ethnography as the method to capture attitudes and behaviours of respondents to provide participants’ perspectives for insights into their motivations and the factors that define MR.⁸⁹ Ethnography documents ideologies, behaviours, activities, relationships, and contextual factors that define communities.⁹⁰ The ethnographic technique also helped me to immerse myself in the participants’ religious environment to understand the Churches’ culture, practices, and themes that emerged.

A central aspect of the ethnographic and phenomenological procedures involved fieldwork. The aim of the fieldwork was to visit the fields (sites) of the study and collect primary data on the Churches practices and activities in the various stages of international migration. I conducted the fieldwork in Ghana and Australia between December 2013 and August 2014. I followed up the data collection with phone calls, emails, and the use of the Churches’ social media in 2014 and 2015. I used the following fieldwork techniques: participant observation and interviews (semi-structured and unstructured) to gather the needed information. I also consulted the Churches’ documents, files, website documents and videos, DVDs, flyers, newspaper articles, handbooks, circulars, and posters. I examined the information gathered to determine if they contained relevant information for the study. I verified the authenticity of the data by checking with the leaders of the churches and by comparing their consistency with information gathered during my interview sessions.

⁸⁷ Bruce L. Berg, and Howard Lune, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 8 ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2012); Michael A. and Matthew B. Miles Huberman, *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion* (London: SAGE, 2002); Virginia and Victoria Clarke Braun, *Successful Qualitative Research : A Practical Guide for Beginners* (London: SAGE, 2013); Kirin Narayan, *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁸⁸ Douglas Allen, "Phenomenology of Religion," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Gale, 2005), 7086-101.

⁸⁹ Mark Walsh, *Research Made Real: A Guide for Students* (United Kingdom: Nelson Thornes Ltd, 2001).

⁹⁰ Narayan; Herbert J. Rubin, and Rubin, Irene, *Qualitative Interviewing : The Art of Hearing Data*, 3 ed. (California: SAGE, 2012); John. Lofland, and Lofland, Lyn H., *Analyzing Social Settings : A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 3 ed. (California: Belmont, 1995). I. Parker, "Lacanian Discourse Analysis in Psychology Seven Theoretical Elements," *Theory & Psychology* 15, no. 2 (2005): 36; Harry F. Wolcott, "Writing up Qualitative Research Better," *Qualitative Health Research* 12, no. 1 (2002).

1.4.3a Participant Observation

Participant observation was one of the instruments I used in collecting data for the thesis. Participant observation involved making trips to the PCK in Kumasi, the CoP in Accra, and their extensions in Australia. I participated in the Churches' practices in both Ghana and Australia. On average, I visited both Churches, three times every week. I made my trips on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays. These were the days the Churches met to worship, had Bible study, and All-Night Prayer vigils respectively. Apart from the weekly visits, I also had the opportunity to participate in special monthly programmes and meetings of the Churches. On one occasion, I stayed at the CoP's Paradise Prayer Centre (PPC) as a Waitee (a person praying and fasting at a prayer camp) during the centres '21 day revival programme,' in the month of January 2014. I also joined in night-vigils at the PCK in the month of March 2014. Besides the Churches' visits, I visited the homes and sometimes workplaces of key informants in both Ghana and Australia. The visits became less frequent as the study progressed.

During my visits, I participated in the Churches' activities to understand the significance of MR for worshippers and to establish a rapport with them. At the Churches, I participated in a range of activities including, singing, fasting, prayers, and the prophetic declarations. I observed the PCK's ambiance during ritual activities of the ritual experts in Ghana and Australia. Besides the rituals, I also made efforts to listen to and participate in chats before the Churches began their worship services and after the services to capture the narratives that floated around in the churches especially at the CoP. I tried to be part of the conversations, especially when the topic was familiar to me. I would sometimes direct the chats towards my topic. I found the group chats helpful in a number of ways. It was a way of supplementing information obtained from my interviews. It was also in a context in which members expressed their thoughts more freely.

Members would talk about their international migration experiences, challenges, fears, and hopes as well as the activities of the Churches. The chats also gave me insights into members' experiences and the significance they attached to the churches' MR practices. In this way, I was able to make friends who became my regular informants. The chats guided the way I structured my follow-up interview questions. My status as Ghanaian and a Pentecostal made it easy for me to blend in, chat, participate, and observe the functions of the Churches. They did not view me as a stranger at all; rather they saw me as part of them. Finally, I also observed the moods and actions of participants during worship, teachings, and

testimony times at the Churches. The observations made during these visits were recorded in my field notebook that I carried along.

1.4.3b Interviews

In addition to using the participant observation, I conducted face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted using either English or Twi language, and in some cases, both languages. The aim of the interviews was to collect members' individual accounts of MR. It was also to hear members' own stories of their migration plans, accounts of their journeys, and their settling in Australia. I also interviewed during my visits to the Churches, in both structured and unstructured formats. Some interviews were scheduled others were not. The scheduled interviews were formal with open-ended questions. The structured and scheduled ones followed prior notices to my interlocutors. These interviews included those with my gatekeepers; Apostle Dr. Opoku Onyinah, Pastor Marfo, Apostle Addison, Prophet Victor Kusi-Boateng, Pastor Moffat, and other selected leaders of the two Churches. The duration of the structured interviews was rather long; the leaders used the opportunity to talk about the history and ethos of their Churches as well as practices in connection with international migration. The longest structured interview I had with the leaders, lasted three hours. Shorter interviews often lasted about thirty minutes.

The unstructured interviews took the form of casual conversations with members at the Churches and occasionally in their homes. I would spend time with interviewees before the Churches' services and after the services were over. I also conducted some interviews anytime it was convenient at the Churches. Some respondents would walk to me to volunteer information on their own because the leaders had announced my purpose at the Churches. The respondents felt free to talk about their experiences during the unstructured interviews. The longest unstructured interview lasted 90 minutes. The duration of the interviews varied according to whom I was talking to, the specific day, place, and time of the interview.

I had an interview guide (protocol) for the interviews. These were questions covering a range of topics about religious practices in the process of international migration. I made use of handwritten notes and an audio recorder to record information during the interviews. The reason for this was to ensure that the weakness in both procedures would be overcome. Besides, in some instances, some of my interlocutors attempted to decline the interview as I

informed them about the audio recording. They shared with me how they became uncomfortable or felt distracted with audio-recordings; as a result, I gave participants the freedom to choose what they preferred.

1.5 Ethical Issues

I made efforts to protect the identity of the interviewees by using pseudonyms. I gave participants the choice to participate or opt out of the research anytime before the end of 2015. Before accessing the field of study, I sent to the leaders of the churches, official letters via emails to obtain their permission for their churches to participate in the study. The emails followed the letter of introduction from the VUW Ethics Committee. With particular reference to the CoP, I obtained the approval from the chairperson before interviewing any participant of the church. The situation was the same in Australia. For the PCK, besides obtaining permission from Victor Kusi-Boateng (the founder and leader of the Church), I also obtained permission from the leaders of the Ghana National Association of Charismatic and Christian Council to explain the aim of the study and the questions I would be asking a group within the association. While I am fully responsible for the interpretations I offer in this thesis, I have represented the voices of my respondents extensively throughout the thesis. For this reason, I adopted a personal narrative and dialogue-based writing styles in the writing of this thesis.

To analyse the data collected, I used the research questions in the thesis as the reference point in organising the data for analysis. I relied on the analytic strategy suggested by Robert K. Yin. The relevant strategy that helped in the organisation of my field data included the following. I placed the data into different arrays, made a matrix of categories, placed the evidence from the data within the categories and tabulated the frequency of the different events, practices, and themes in the data.⁹¹ Secondly, I transcribed the interview data and analysed Churches' documents and the information obtained as a participant observer.⁹² I also coded the study for analyses. I coded data from Ghana as GHDT and data from Australia as AUDT. The coding enabled me to differentiate between the data from Ghana and Australia.

⁹¹ Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Smart to Finish* (London: Guilford Press, 2011).

⁹² Ibid.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

I discuss Ghana's socioeconomic and religious landscape in Ghana at the time of the study in Chapter 2, with particular emphasis on Ghana's contemporary international migrations and the emerging MR on the Ghanaian religious field. I explore in this section, the link between the history of Ghana's local migratory religiosity and the contemporary MR. I narrow my discussions on MR to the ritual activities of the PCK in Chapter 3. The Chapter explores the ritual culture of the Church and identifies MR rituals, especially how the rituals influence the members' decisions to migrate or travel overseas. Chapter 4 explores the Darkuman Central Assembly of the CoP and the Church's prayer camp (PPC) in Dansoman, Accra. The Chapter examines the activities of the Church and the lives of the members, to discuss the "grassroots MR narratives."

Chapter 5 provides the migratory accounts of migrant members of both Churches in Australia to discuss MR in their journeys. I examine how prospective Ghanaian migrants carried MR into Australia. I also discuss the ways the migrants used MR to facilitate the journeys from their preparation for departure, the journey, and upon arrival. The sixth Chapter explores the diaspora portion of MR rituals at the PCM. I focus on the continuity and change of MR rituals in Australia. Similarly, Chapter 7 discusses the diaspora portion of MR narratives of the CoPS to demonstrate the link between the grassroots narratives in the homeland and the host land. I demonstrate in the last two Chapters, how migrants' practices of MR in the diaspora, is the precursor of the reverse mission for both Churches. In Chapter 8, I conclude the thesis by tying together the strands of the arguments that ran through the Chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

GHANA'S RELIGIONS AND AN EMERGING MIGRATION RELIGIOSITY

2.0 Introduction

Ghana has been facing a socioeconomic crisis.⁹³ Many people are seeing their sources of wealth dry up and are uncertain about their future.⁹⁴ A general absence of employment opportunities has led to mass unemployment especially among the youth, including those with high educational qualifications. Many Ghanaians have become impoverished and the chasm between the rich and the poor has widened.⁹⁵ Frustrated by this situation and desperate to achieve upward social mobility, some Ghanaians, both rich and poor, have come to view migrating to the richer nations of the West as a way out of the predicament.⁹⁶ Motivated by the images of the glitter and glamour of the West conveyed to them through TV, Radio, the internet, and narratives of Ghanaian migrants in the West, aspiring migrants in Ghana envision a life of prosperity in a Western country.⁹⁷ Many people in Ghana believe they can achieve their unfulfilled promises of prosperity and success in the West.⁹⁸ Moreover, many prospective migrants in Ghana link their migrating to a Western country to their capacity to relieve their families of the sufferings in Ghana through the remittances they would send back home periodically.

Migrating from Ghana to Western countries has many challenges.⁹⁹ Overwhelmed by the continuous flow of migrants from the developing world into their cities, many Western nations have policies that restrict the entry of such outsiders. In fact, the immigration policies of Western nations consider Africans in general, especially when compared to migrants from

⁹³ Abdulai Abdul-Gafaru, "The Politics of Resource Sharing and Regional Inequality in Ghana: Lessons for the Post-2015 Development Agenda," *Development* 57, no. 3-4 (2015).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 488.

⁹⁶ Boris Nieswand, "The Burgers' Paradox: Migration and the Transnationalization of Social Inequality in Southern Ghana," *Ethnography* 15, no. 4 (2014): 403-25.

⁹⁷ John Anarfi, Kofi Awusao-Asare, and N. Nsowah-Nuamah, "Push and Pull Factors of International Migration: Country Report-Ghana," *Eurostat* 10, no. E (2000).

⁹⁸ Girish Daswani, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility," in *Traveling Spirits, Migrants, Markets and Mobilities*, ed. Gertrud Hüwelmeier and Kristine Krause (London: Routledge, 2010), 67-78.

⁹⁹ Lawrence T. Udo-Ekpo, *The Africans in Australia: Expectations and Shattered Dreams* (1999); Katherine B. et al Gibney, "The Profile of Health Problems in African Immigrants Attending an Infectious Disease Unit in Melbourne, Australia," *The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 80, no. 5 (2009): 805-11; Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo, 61-81.

Europe and some Asian countries, as “unworthy” for admission into their countries.¹⁰⁰ The policies have made obtaining international visas a tough and often humiliating experience for these Africans, as many applicants are denied visas.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, my respondents shared that the migratory experience itself included challenges in obtaining financial resources to support the trip or finding a willing sponsor in the West. Aware of the challenges they needed to overcome in their migration aspirations, many prospective migrants in Ghana turn to religion. Their objective is to seek spiritual help from religious agents and institutions to secure visas to the Western nations they migrate to and for protection as well as success during the migration process.

In this Chapter, I argue that the practice of enlisting the help of religious agents for the purpose of migration or travelling to the West is having a marked effect on the Ghanaian religious landscape, creating a distinct religious practice (MR). First, it has created an increase in the demand for religious agents with the capacity for solving migration-related spiritual problems in Ghana. Second, in response to this demand, purveyors of spiritual powers in Ghana have shaped their practices to the needs of prospective migrants.

My second claim is that the (emerging) MR in Ghana demonstrates a Ghanaian tradition or pattern of engaging the supernatural in migration. Before globalization provided fluid transnational networks that facilitated the migration of Ghanaian populations on a global scale, the correlation between migration and religious practices played out on the local scale, that is, in the context of migrations confined to Ghana. Local MRs developed in the context of population movement starting from northern Ghana and ending in the south. Ghanaian migrations to overseas locations in contemporary times have resulted in the exponential development of the local MRs. Furthermore, the sense of importance connected to international migrations today, the increase in Ghana’s population movement to overseas countries, and the engagement of diverse Ghanaian religions in international migration have led to the playing out of the local MR on the global stage.

The discussion will show how notions rooted in indigenous religious understandings about links between travel and religious practice largely inform the construction of the current notions and practices related to MRs. The common denominator of Ghana's MR,

¹⁰⁰ Mogens Hobolth, "Researching Mobility Barriers: The European Visa Database," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, no. 3 (2014): Rey, 114.

¹⁰¹ Hobolth, 424-35.

whether local or global, old or new, is the belief that migration is beset with challenges that call for the enlisting of supernatural agents if one must achieve the goal of the migration.¹⁰² Invariably, both local and international migrations encourage participation in religious practices that facilitate the process, provide a sense of safety, and foster the goals of the migration endeavour.

I demonstrate my claims by first offering a general account of the relationship between Ghana's religions, the emerging MR, and the socioeconomic and political contexts that have given birth to it. I will also identify two religions involved in this MR and discuss their roles. The discussion will trace the possible links between the present MR and the two religions during earlier historical periods in Ghana to identify distinct features the religions bring to the emerging MR. The religions are the Ghanaian (African) traditional religions (GTR) and the Ghanaian Pentecostals (GPs). The rationale for selecting these two religions is that they are very visible in the media in terms of their relationship with MR and have historical links to Ghana's migrations. The objective for beginning with a discussion of Ghana's MR, is to identify some very general features of the process that will concern me throughout the dissertation. I will set out to define these terms and themes clearly since I will draw from them in subsequent Chapters.

This Chapter differs from the Chapters that will follow in its focus on these general themes. In later Chapters, I will look at how these processes play out in much more specific contexts, that is, in two Ghanaian Pentecostal churches—the Power Chapel (PC) and the Church of Pentecost (CoP) in Ghana and Australia. I frame the discussion as responses to the following questions: how is MR emerging in Ghana, what are its features, who are the key religious players, the relationship between Ghana's religions and the MR, and what do prior links between religion and travel share with current practice? While I build on historical data and the contemporary research on migration and religion in Ghana for this discussion, I also draw on my personal observations in Ghana and information provided by informants during my fieldwork.

¹⁰² I use the phrase “travel and migration” interchangeably in this study because my findings indicate that not all Ghanaians who want to travel or have travelled abroad leave Ghana for good. Many of the interviewees just wanted to travel to establish international connections and business contacts. Others wanted to study abroad, visit families for holidays, work and stay temporarily in order to be able to establish businesses back home.

2.1 Contemporary International Migrations in Ghana

While sub-Saharan Africans including Ghanaians have always been on the move, their histories indicate that there are periods during which travelling or the mass migrations of populations have sharply increased.¹⁰³ One of the most dominant streams of migrations in Ghana emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁰⁴ These migrations consisted of “internal or rural-urban movements and international migrations of labour.”¹⁰⁵ Contemporary migrations in Ghana exhibit the same patterns of movements. My interviews in Ghana revealed that socioeconomic hardship was an important cause of international migrations.

Many of my respondents were seeking to escape to the West to enjoy better living conditions. The socioeconomic decline in Ghana, its links with the corruption of the present government, including how it is pushing Ghanaians to seek greener pastures in the West were the key themes of the conversations I had with my respondents in Ghana. Most people I spoke to expressed deep interest in migrating to the rich nations of the West and Asia where they can find good work, make money and send some of the money to their relatives back at home. The fact that over 200 Ghanaian fans of Ghana’s National Soccer Team sought for and were given asylum in Brazil after entering the country on tourist visas to watch the 2014 World Cup, attests to how many Ghanaians are frustrated about the country's economy and how strongly they feel about trying their luck in richer nations.¹⁰⁶ These same sentiments explain why among Africans seeking asylum around the world, Ghanaian applicants topped

¹⁰³ Samir Amin, "Migrations in Contemporary Africa: A Retrospective View," in *Migration Experience in Africa*, ed. J. Baker and T.A. Aina (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995); J.K. Akokpari, "The Political Economy of Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Sociological Review* 3, no. 1 (1999).

¹⁰⁴ L. McLeod, *On the Spread of Anti-Witchcraft Cults in Modern Ashanti*, ed. J. Goody, *Changing Social Structures in Ghana: Essays in Comparative Sociology of a New State and a Old Tradition* (London: International African Institute, 1975), 30; Margaret Peil, "Ghanaians Abroad," *African Affairs* 94 (1995); E. Schildkrout, *The Ideology of Regionalism in Ghana*, ed. W.A. Shack and E.P. Skinner, *Strangers in African Societies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Akosua Perbi, "Mobility in Pre-Colonial Asante from a Historical Perspective," *Ghana Research Review* 7, no. 1&2 (1991); Aderanti Adepoju, "Migrations in West Africa," in *A Paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission of International Migration* (2005), 30.

¹⁰⁵ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ Monica Mark, "Ghanaian Soccer Fans Seek Asylum in Brazil," *The Guardian*, July 14, 2014. www.voicesofAfrica.com. (Accessed 09/09/2015).

applicants from war-torn Libya (7,649 Ghanaians to 6,529 Libyans)—according to a U.N. Refugee Agency report in 2014.¹⁰⁷

Equally important in explaining the growing importance people attach to international migration in contemporary Ghana is how they tie increased transnational mobility to “becoming somebody” or achieving upward social mobility. In Ghana, high social status and prestige are associated with people who have travelled or still travel to the West or overseas countries to conduct business, visit, or study in academic institutions. Often referred to as *Borgas*, such people are viewed as “internationalized” and are highly respected for their extensive overseas contacts and familiarity with contemporary global trends.¹⁰⁸ More importantly, the ease or freedom with which *Borgas* move between Ghana and the rich nations of the West makes many in Ghana associate the *Borgas* with economic and social advancement. To be a *Borga* in Ghana is indeed a coveted status.¹⁰⁹ Many of my interviewees linked their aspirations to become “somebody” with the transnational mobility that will come with their migrating to the West. They said that they desired to travel or migrate to the West so that they too can gain some prestige or social recognition as “internationalized.” Using an Akan proverb to make his views clear, Patrick shared his desire to travel to become “somebody, *“Na se Ekuro dɔɔsɔ a, yentsena faakɔ engye enimguasee... ena se wotse faakɔ a, wotse wo’adee so.”* (If there are so many places in the world, you do not remain in one location and incur shame; when you stay in one place, you learn nothing new and no one recognizes you; besides, you sit on your untapped potentials).¹¹⁰ Patrick’s sentiments resonated with many of the youths I interviewed.

To be adventurous is a highly valued attribute in Ghanaian culture and migrating to far-flung and strange lands in the West is also viewed as a sign of the migrant’s adventurous spirit. Many respondents talked about how this cultural perception made them want to migrate to the West. The link between being adventurous and travelling to, and living in the West is a vestige of the “exoticness” and power associated with colonial agents and the places they came from in colonial Ghana (Gold Coast).¹¹¹ Because they were the rulers at that

¹⁰⁷ Mail and Guardian Africa, “7 Surprising Things About Asylum Seekers from Africa—Where Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal Beat Libya and Somalia,” in *Business* (African Truth Multimedia, 2015).

¹⁰⁸ Peil, 345-67.

¹⁰⁹ Megan Behrent to African Post Colonial Literature, 1997.

¹¹⁰ Personal communication with Patrick at a religious Prayer Camp in Ghana on 10/12/ 2013.

¹¹¹ Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), 72.

time, travel to the colonial master's country was considered a privilege as well as a sign of the colonial subject's daring nature.¹¹² Upon returning to Ghana, the person would be respectfully referred to as a "been-to" (one who has been to the White man's land).¹¹³ Not only was a "been-to" respected for his/her daring spirit, his or her exposure to the Whiteman's high civilization enhances his or her status in society.¹¹⁴ In addition to their status, it is said that a "been-to's" knowledge of the world is enhanced because of the exposure to foreign cultures, and thus, acquires Western mannerisms which were and still are attached superior value in Ghana.¹¹⁵ While contemporary postcolonial narratives and views are critical of this colonial attitude, their influence is still prevalent and finds expressions in how Ghanaians view migrants in the West highly as having adventurous spirits.¹¹⁶ These perceptions made many of the people I spoke to in Ghana, want to visit, have business connections, or live in a Western country at a point in their lives.

The mindset of many Ghanaians who aspire to migrate to the West for the reasons I have discussed above, is that success in their quest for entry and legal settlement in their desired destinations in the West, requires some form of divine intervention and fortification. This intervention will ensure a safe journey, protection from malevolent forces, and luck in encounters with immigration authorities. This mindset provides a window for understanding why prospective migrants link their travel aspirations with their participation in various forms of religious practices. The practices include rituals that help clientele as they prepare for the journeys, during the journeys, and as they arrive and settle in their host land. Some religious agents and lay worshippers have also ingeniously created genres of migration-centred narratives. These narratives speak to the questions that prospective migrants have about different aspects of their migrations.

Indeed, migration to overseas destinations, especially, the West has come to occupy such a crucial place in the praxis of religious institutions in Ghana. Because of this, we can

¹¹²Sarah Nutall, ed. *African and Diaspora Aesthetics* (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 347.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵R.W. Hefner, ed. *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 99-125.

¹¹⁶Richard P. Werbner and T. O. Ranger, *Postcolonial Identities in Africa* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1996), 202-92; Albert Wuaku, *Hindu Gods in West Africa: Ghanaian Devotees of Shiva and Krishna* (Brill, 2013), 82.

safely say that migration to the West has become the basis for distinct forms of religious practices, where migration is the focus (MR).

2.2 Ghana's Emerging Migration Religiosity (MR)

In this section, I demonstrate how the link between international migration and religious practice in contemporary Ghana is creating MR and how this in turn shapes the entire religious landscape of Ghana. The interviews and research I conducted in Ghana and my observations of the happenings in the Ghanaian religious field revealed an emerging and a fast growing MR. There are robust “passports and visa industries, that depend on the activities of a plethora of counsellors, diviners, prophets, travel shrines, marabouts, and pastors in Ghana.”¹¹⁷ The pivotal roles of the ritual experts underscore the centrality of prophecy, travel-centred narratives, divination, prayers, fasting, and other forms of supernatural armament in the preparation phase of the migration process.¹¹⁸ Prospective migrants and their families participate in the activities of religious shrines, temples, and prayer camps to undergo what Adogame describes as, “supernatural incubation and inoculation to fortify themselves against the machinations of purveyors of supernatural harm such as the witches, sorcerers, ‘the evil eye,’ or envious family members and friends.”¹¹⁹ In the next section, I expand the discussion on Ghana's MR by discussing what my respondents said about their participation in it.

2.2.1 Prospective Migrants and MR in Ghana

My interviewees in Ghana demonstrated a strong sense of need for supernatural enhancement in their efforts to travel abroad. Additionally, religious programmes on TV and Radio in which people called in to make requests for prayers and anecdotes demonstrated how many prospective migrants sought spiritual help from different sources on the Ghanaian religious landscape. Some of these seekers of spiritual help described how their migration plans had stalled and were in need of a spiritual boost. Others, especially those in the very early stages of their plans were anticipating challenges and wanted religious agents to “clear their paths” so that their plans would unfold successfully.

¹¹⁷ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 20.

¹¹⁸ Mirjam de Bruijn, "Mobile Africa, Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond," in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, ed. Robin Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 74-82.

¹¹⁹ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 20; Ebenezer Obadere, in *Religion Crossing Boundaries : Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 31-48.

The religious landscape of Ghana provides the grammar for the spiritual quests of prospective migrants. As a result, the prospective migrants sought spiritual help from different sources of ritual experts in Ghana. The explanations that my respondents offered for seeking supernatural resources in their efforts to travel revealed some related themes. These included popular cultural notions about spiritual impediments that can stand in a person's way when embarking on an important venture such as migrating overseas and the need for spiritual empowerment to overcome these barriers.

The issue of witchcraft was also on the lips of almost every interviewee. Many people told me about their fears of the possibility of witchcraft derailing their travel plans by orchestrating travel visa denials, illnesses, the death of someone who could help them, and financial constraints. Others described actual instances where witches thwarted their efforts or the efforts of relatives to migrate to the West. Auntie Akua, a businessperson at Accra *Makola* market and a member of a religious centre shared her harrowing account of witchcraft attacks on Ghanaian migrants in the West with me. She also said witches killed her brother who was a migrant in the U.S.A.:

My own brother who lived in the U.S.A. died because he would not listen and would not seek spiritual help. He thought when you cross the border and go overseas; you are beyond the reach of witchcraft... When he was travelling, he did not inform anyone. Moreover, when he got there, he refused to connect with home or even apologize. I was here when at last he called me, saying that he saw two huge roaches in his bedroom the previous night and killed them. Since then, he began to experience a serious migraine. I told him to seek spiritual help there; he never listened, until three weeks later he died! Even with me, my own daughter whom I suffered to raise, trained, and sent abroad, neglected me totally... I had to seek spiritual help, and the Mallam told me that evil forces had taken me off her mind.¹²⁰

Auntie Akua's experience explains beliefs about the ways in which witchcraft can derail migrants' plans, leading to death, deportation, abortion of travel purpose, or the neglect of obligations towards relatives in the homeland. Many respondents shared their fears similar to those expressed by Auntie Akua. They shared that whatever happened to a person in the spiritual realm had implications for the person's physical outlook. To attain success in one's spiritual and physical endeavours, people had to deploy the services and energies of the benevolent forces resident in the spiritual world.

¹²⁰ Personal communication with Auntie Akua on 03/01/2014.

These perspectives resonate with what scholars refer to as “enchanted worldview,” where African migrants link causes of social dislocations to sources of supernatural harm.¹²¹ Some people recounted stories they heard from family members, friends, colleagues, in the media, testimonies at religious centres, and local movies featuring the use of witchcraft to derail the plans of migrants. Many referred to scenes in a popular Ghanaian movie entitled *Aburokyire bayie* (Overseas witchcraft) to bolster their claims. The movie is a depiction of the malevolent activities of witchcraft among Ghanaian migrants abroad.

Some respondents told me about how the testimonies of people who enlisted the help of ritual agents and had been successful in their efforts to travel overseas motivated them to do the same. Five people, two women, and three men said they were seeking for spiritual signs that would direct them as to when and how to carry out an activity related to their migration. A few respondents stated that the advertisement of ritual agents on billboards, TV, and radio stations describing their capabilities in the use of religious rituals to engage problems, including those related to migration sensitized them to the need for spiritual enhancement.

Regarding what prospective migrants in Ghana did to access the supernatural for their travel endeavours, most explained that they consulted with various religious leaders, for spiritual advice, and prayers. Some people described how they would “wait on the Lord” at religious centres (prayer, fasting, and keeping vigil) or call in to TV and radio religious programmes and request for *sunsum mu akwankyere* (spiritual guidance) or prophecies concerning their travel plans. Other individuals purchased a repertoire of ritual paraphernalia from various religions as spiritual travel aids. Some interviewees said they also enlisted supernatural aid from ritual specialists on behalf of their relatives already living and working in the West so that those migrants could achieve breakthroughs in their migration plans. Many respondents described how they combined more than one strategy to access the supernatural in their efforts to travel overseas.

¹²¹ Claudia Währisch-Oblau, “Material Salvation: Healing, Deliverance, and “Breakthrough” in African Migrant Churches in Germany,” in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, Candy Gunther Brown and Harvey Cox eds., 61-75 (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 62; Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff eds., *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual Power in Post-colonial Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Gerrie Ter Haar, “Ghanaian Witchcraft Beliefs: A View from the Netherlands,” in *Imagining Evil: Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations in Contemporary Africa*, Gerrie Ter Haar ed., (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), 92-112; Elom Dovlo, “Witchcraft in Contemporary Ghana,” in *Imagining Evil: Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations in Contemporary Africa*, Gerrie Ter Haar ed., (Trenton NJ: African World Press, 2007), 67-92.

My respondents explained that sometimes they consulted more than one religious leader at a time or simultaneously—Pastors, Gurus or Marabouts, for themselves, friends, and relatives. The ritual specialists they consulted depended on specific nature of the migration-related challenges, and the specialization of the ritual agent. The migration challenges they said they sent to religious leaders for solutions included difficulties in securing visas. Another factor was the problems aspiring migrants had with making contacts with individuals or institutions (including schools) in the West who would invite these prospective them to countries in the West. In addition, challenges associated with establishing and maintaining business connections with Ghanaian migrants or pen pals in the West that can translate into sponsorships, business connections, and migration plans, were the motivation for consulting the ritual experts.¹²²

A key observation was that even though my respondents said they had a number of life challenges that needed spiritual engagement—illnesses, poverty, and unemployment, they saw migration to the West as the answer to these problems, and therefore isolated migration challenges as those in need of utmost spiritual attention. Another observation I made was that respondents seemed prepared to go to any length in their quest for the spiritual empowerment they needed to realize their dreams of migrating to richer countries in the West. An incident reported by Ghanaian media sources on May 9, 2013, in which four people died while fifteen more were injured in a stampede during the distribution of anointing oil on a Sunday church service in Accra underscores the desperate need for such spiritual aids in Ghana.¹²³ I will add that many of my respondents considered the special ritual items such as the anointing oil as spiritually potent paraphernalia especially those that make international travel possible.

Aside from what respondents told me and media reports, I witnessed first-hand the rush to purchase religious paraphernalia and ritual objects such as special handkerchiefs, calendars, water, soaps, candles, headscarves, necklaces, rings, and wristbands at the religious centres I visited in Ghana for various purposes. Although it is true that such ritual paraphernalia can be used for other ritual purposes, most of the individuals I spoke to emphasized how their real and or anticipated migration-related challenges motivated them

¹²² Personal communication with Akosua Pomaa on 15/02/2014.

¹²³ Web Master, "Ghana: Four Killed, fifteen injured at T.B. Joshua Church Stampede for 'anointing oil,'" *African Spotlight*, 9 May 2013.

to purchase such ritual items. According to Patrick, ritual experts imbue the ritual paraphernalia with spiritual powers to repel attacks from evil supernatural agents and safeguard migration plans among other things.¹²⁴ A woman also said ritual objects from Pentecostal churches are similar to those that the prophetic healing *sunsum sɔré* traditions (AICs) offer, and they carry divine powers and special anointing for all aspects of breakthroughs. Vendors sold these items at all the religious centres I visited between December 2013 and January 2014 in Ghana.

The point of the discussion thus far is that, because aspiring migrants view them to be efficacious in helping prospective migrants in Ghana and migrants from Ghana in the West achieve their ambitions to travel and settle overseas, there is a significant reliance on ritual specialists and the devices they offer clientele to offset the impediments to oversea travel. The contemporary Ghanaian pre-occupation with international migration has indeed given birth to the demand for an entirely new cadre of awe-inspiring and miracle working religious agents and a repertoire of religious activities in Ghana. In the next section, I offer an account of how Ghanaian religious agents are responding to the growing need for their services by prospective migrants and migrants by re-shaping their religious activities and formats.

2.2.2 Ghana's Religious Agents and MR

A growing practice associated with the MR is how religious agents are shaping their religious practices to the migration related spiritual needs of their followers and clientele in Ghana. One of the areas in which this is playing out is the construction of new teachings and narratives centred on migration or travelling overseas. This practice is associated mostly with Pentecostals in Ghana.¹²⁵ A dominant theme in their discourse is the idea that “Pentecostalism is the religion that guarantees the material prosperity of the faithful by providing them access to the modern world.”¹²⁶ I suggest that this discourse tacitly promotes international migration especially to the Europe, North America, and Australia. It is in these places that the pursuit of material success can be most profitable. In other words, international migration is a channel to the material prosperity Ghana’s Pentecostalism promises its faithful worshippers.

¹²⁴ Personal communication with Patrick (a teacher) at the PPC on 21/01/2014.

¹²⁵ van Dijk, 135-59.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

In keeping with this line of thinking, Ghanaian religious leaders of Pentecostal churches are creatively building on either scriptural teachings and traditional proverbs in constructing a genre of new narratives that lend support to people's plans to migrate to the West. In the religious communities I visited, I heard various renditions of passages from the Bible used as justifications for migrations to the West. For instance, a passage from James 1:17, "every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above" had been re-stated as "every good thing and every perfect thing comes from 'abroad'" by a Pentecostal church. The community simply replaced the word "above" in the original passage with "abroad" in the rendition version and uses it to offer scriptural support for the expressed desires of members to travel abroad in order to gain access to the "good and perfect gifts" (referred to in the scripture).

Three prophets I interviewed, offered an interpretation of another biblical passage, "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"(Psalm 24:1) and used their version to justify the plans of their members who expressed desires "to travel anywhere in the world." In explaining why he felt this passage offered scriptural support for the migration plans of some of his members one of the pastors said, "Because... as children of God, they [those members desiring to migrate] have the right to travel across the globe. The globe belongs to 'their father.'" ¹²⁷ The interpretations of these scriptures are somewhat arbitrary. Nevertheless, by using them to support members' migration plans, the prophets create an impression that these plans are in line with scriptural teachings. Prospective migrants are encouraged to carry on with their plans by these rendition teachings. In some cases, the motivation to migrate comes from these renditions. My point here is that a theology of international migration is emerging in Ghanaian Pentecostal circles as part of the developing MR. Religiously oriented Ghanaian worshippers seek religious authentication and the impetus to embark on their migration agendas.

There would seem to be an economic consideration motivating the religious leaders to encourage members of their flock to seek greener pastures in the West. Although these leaders did not explicitly state these considerations and I could not push them to reveal these, each time I would engage them in casual conversations, they would describe how their clientele living and working in the West as migrants shower them with money and gifts,

¹²⁷ Personal communication with Pastor Chris at a prayer centre in Accra on 21/01/2014.

especially when these migrants came to Ghana on holidays. Some leaders mentioned that some of their clientele in the West send them money from time to time as a way of thanking them for their continuous spiritual help. Other leaders described how migrants sponsored some of their projects and important events during their TV and radio programmes. I came away with the impression that some of these religious leaders supported the migration plans of their clientele to the West because they too, like the migrants' friends, family members, and acquaintances benefitted from the migrants living and working in these richer countries.

Apart from creating narratives to motivate overseas travel, religious leaders in Ghana are responding to the reliance of prospective migrants and migrants in the West on their services by increasing their public visibility in many ways. Using huge signposts that dot the urban and rural landscape, small notices, and hand written notices, they advertise among other specialisations, their competence to address both material and spiritual challenges in relation to international travels and visa acquisitions. Some of my respondents described how they learned about the ritual specialists they consulted for supernatural enablement to secure visas and international business connections from huge signposts displaying the skills and areas of the spiritual expertise of these religious leaders. Ama Pokua, a Pentecostal, told me of how helpful signposts are in directing help seekers to such religious leaders:

These days we do not struggle to find ritual help at all. All you need to do is check for signposts on the principal streets... When my sister and I saw the huge signposts of the traditional religious leaders displaying their capabilities and the fact that you can even just call them and 'get the job done,' it was much easy for us... We are both in contact with one Nana Oboanipa at Kasoa here in Accra, who is helping, besides our Pentecostal religious leaders, my husband with visa issues.¹²⁸

Ama Pokua's story is just one of the many accounts I heard that illustrates how effective signposts of spiritual experts are as modes of their public outreach. Figures 3, 4, and 5 are examples of such signposts on the main streets of Accra and Kasoa. The ritual experts promise problem-free visa acquisitions, visa breakthroughs, and success during such travels on the signposts. I present the various signposts to depict how popular they have become as modes of outreach to prospective clientele. It was evident that religious leaders from almost all the religious traditions in Ghana used signposts of outreach to attract prospective migrant clientele.

¹²⁸ Personal communication with Ama Pokua on 18/12/2013.



Figure 3. Mallam Musah's sign post on Accra-Nsawam road. Under the list of problems listed is travelling issues (number 6)



Figure 4. Sheikh Dr. Black and White (visa Acquisition problems no. 16)

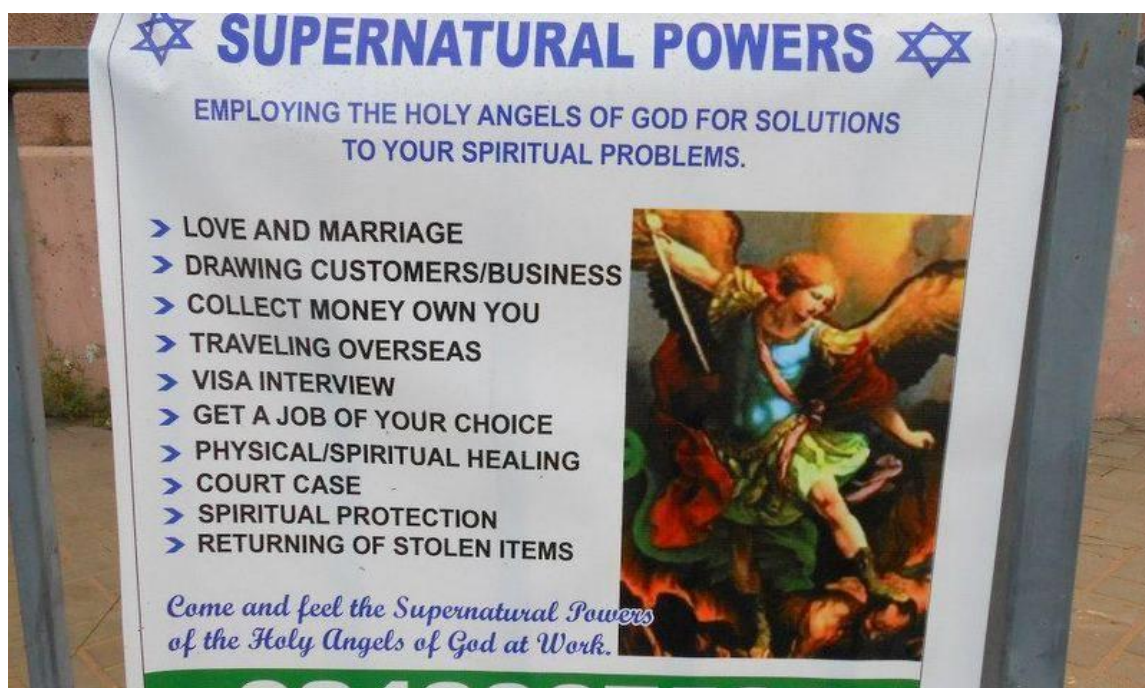


Figure 5. Visa interview and travelling overseas no. 4 & 5 on the banner for the temple if Israel King of the Jews

From the few enlisted signposts, it is obvious that religious leaders are creatively shaping their practices to newly emerging needs of their clientele. These include migration, which prospective migrants and migrants in the West have identified as a venture that deserves spiritual attention. It is clear that the religious leaders are shaping their practices in promoting and advancing this phenomenon. The signposts of Mallam Musah and Sheikh Dr. Black and White (Figure 3 and 4) show the Islamic twist to the experience. The Ghanaian religious leaders use all forms of communication channels indiscriminately in their efforts to attract public attention to their skills and their services. In addition, it is clear that the various religions (Traditional, Christian, and Islam) are involved in the practice. In this respect, the practice is not unique to one religion in Ghana and thus, what triggers the practice is the quest for international migration. In addition, newly emerging religious movements in Ghana are not left out in this experience. The banner of the Church of Israel King of the Jews,—a new religious movement in Ghana (Figure 5) shows how the religious leaders have identified overseas travel as an important area deserving spiritual attention.

Audio-visual media religious programmes, to which local and overseas audiences call in with requests for prayers from religious leaders in Ghana, offer another window of insight

into the role of modern media forms in Ghana's MR.¹²⁹ Leaders of religious groups tailor their audio-visual media programmes to the needs of prospective Ghanaian migrants and migrants overseas. One group of religious leaders, which has taken advantage of the availability of modern media technology to reach out to existing clientele or expand its clientele base, is the traditional religious priests and priestesses. Reacting to the Pentecostal characterizations of them as agents of Satan and representatives of primitive traditions that have nothing good to offer worshippers in a modern era, the indigenous religious priests and priestesses in Ghana are showing how modern they are and how relevant their teachings and practices are to fears and anxieties of contemporary Ghanaians.

Like Pentecostal leaders, the indigenous priests and priestesses are appropriating modern technology to promote themselves and their traditions. Not a day passes without hearing or seeing Ghanaian indigenous religious leaders demonstrate their supernatural gifts on the various radio and TV stations. On these programmes, they also describe how these gifts are more efficacious in protecting clients from malevolent forces, enabling problem-free travel, visa acquisition, and providing supernatural remedies to challenges associated with international migrations. These programmes also make room for testimonies and live interviews from callers from both Ghana and overseas. The testimonies describe how instrumental the religious leaders have been in spiritually aiding the narrators to realize their migration aspirations. More important and common are the calls from clientele both Ghana and its diaspora for prayers and *Akwantuo mu Akwankyerε* (prophetic and ritual-based guidance on travel) for breakthroughs to leaders of Pentecostal churches.

Listening to the calls on the radio, I noted the desperation in the tone of callers anytime they were discussing issues related to migration, a desperation that conveyed the urgency with which they needed spiritual assistance. During one programme a caller, a woman from Hamilton in Canada, desperately begged for prayers as she prepared for an interview for her residence permit. Another caller, a Ghanaian migrant in a Norwegian prison wept as he described the sequence of unfortunate events that led to his incarceration and processing for deportation to Ghana. He was in desperate need of a prayer that could halt the deportation. Abena Serwaa, a Ghanaian migrant in the U.K. whom I met in Ghana during

¹²⁹ Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Benjamin F. Soares, and Francis B. Nyamnjoh, ed. *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa*, Mass Media in Religion-Africa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2015).

my fieldwork, shared her experiences with such religious programmes on both TV and Radio in Ghana with me:

The religious programmes in the media, especially the ritual and prophetic programmes help us a lot! My husband and I had been looking for travel and employment breakthroughs overseas for a long time until we heard about Togbe Kedinakpor on *Adom* TV... After calling in to narrate our plight, he recited some incantations and told us the month to submit the visa application... The embassy gave my husband a five-year visa to the U.K.! We are now working on his resident permit and later citizenship... I am not a member of *Togbe's* religion but I am convinced of his power because I hear loads of people giving testimonies in the media (radio and TV).¹³⁰

From what Abena Serwaa shared, it is clear that testimonies from migrants who had benefitted from the spiritual services of Ghana's religious leaders were crucial sources of their appeal to prospective clientele. The media outlets used by ritual experts in Ghana include the FM stations such as Channel R, Adam, Peace, Hot, Asempa, and Happy. Popular TV stations known to air these programmes include Metro and Adom. The most popular religious leaders involved in these media, religious programmes include, Prophet-Seer Asamoah-Boateng aka *Apaɛ live* (it is happening live), Apostle Nana Boakye, aka, "The Fireman," Nana Kweku Bonsam, Nana Oboaonipa, and Prophet Nicholas Osei (aka *Kumchacha*). These individuals are renowned for the potency of their magico-religious powers and specialization in matters affecting Ghanaians involved in migrations.¹³¹

Furthermore, because these religious leaders target different categories of people seeking all forms of spiritual help in matters including migrating to the West, they have not limited their advertisement to the billboards, TV, and radio. They use all forms of technology and the media, including social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and cell phones, in order to reach audiences living in far-flung places. In effect, they use any form of media available to achieve a global outreach.

Some of the more widely travelled ritualists emphasize, their "internationalized or been-to" statuses in the social media to demonstrate how their fame is not only local but also international. For example, Nana Kweku Bonsam, a Ghanaian traditional priest displays photos of his ritual practices in Ghana and overseas nations such as Amsterdam, the U.K., and the U.S.A. He also encourages his local and international clientele to spread the news about

¹³⁰ Personal communication with Abena Serwaa on 12/12/2013.

¹³¹ Ilkka Pyysiäinen, *Magic, Miracles, and Religion : A Scientist's Perspective* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltMira Press, 2004).

what he does for them by word of mouth and even in the social media. Figure 6 is a picture of Nana demonstrating his “been to” status on his Facebook page. He donated rings, (which he claimed he imbued with spiritual powers) to Ghanaian migrants during what he calls a “watch-night” ritual service in Amsterdam.¹³² Figure 7 is a picture of Kweku Bonsam using the international media creatively, to authenticate, address his global clientele, and to highlight his “been to status.” The picture is on his website (www.facebook/nanakwakubonsam.com).



Figure 6. Nana Kwaku Bonsam displaying a ritual practice performed overseas on Facebook

¹³² Watch-night services are religious services done throughout either the night or half the night. Most of such services are done on Friday nights between 9:00pm until 4:00am on a Saturday.



Figure 7. Nana Kwaku Bonsam display of his interview on SAHARA TV in the U.S.A. on his Facebook page.

What Nana and others like him seek to achieve through such advertisements, is to convey to their clientele, how internationalized they are. They also show that they are familiar with the general conditions of Ghanaian migrants in the West and are very well prepared spiritually to deal with them. In a T.V. interview, Nana Togbe Kedinakpor, another traditional priest in Ghana explained his reasons for using all forms of the media to attract people involved in international travel:

We are modernizing our practices because when change comes you also have to change with the times... We also read the society and know what they want and how they want it. We structure our programmes and activities to meet these demands and we are creative with our strategies. As for the 'power,' we have it. We have the spirits who do our bidding and we deploy them for assignments at any time... We know the frustrations in the country especially how people want to travel and try their luck somewhere else... We have to be relevant by the service we provide else, we cease relevance. Besides, I am not the only traditional priest... We also have in mind other religions who brand us as 'powerless' and so with ingenuity we face them squarely in the quest for clients... Now I am 'international...' I have clients all over the world using the media.¹³³

This interview demonstrates to a large extent the sophistication and creative ingenuity of the Ghanaian religious leaders especially the indigenous ritual specialists. They want to show how much they too are abreast with modern trends. They keenly observe the prevailing situation

¹³³ Zet TV's interview with Togbe Kedinakpor on 19/02/2014.

of life for Ghanaians involved in migrations and strategically design practices that speak to clients' needs using the most up to date technology and enhancing their relevance in the process.

Out of curiosity, I inquired from a few of the religious leaders about their reasons for targeting migrants and prospective migrants in their advertisements and other practices. One theme that emerged from the responses was the notion that “international migration has become a spiritual affair” in Ghana. Prophet Vaglas, a Pentecostal religious leader in the Eastern region of Ghana reiterated this theme when he explained:

Overseas travel has become the target of malevolent people and spirits in their quest to destroy every valuable thing in the lives of the people... There was a woman who got a marriage proposal from a 'borga' in Europe. After informing her friends, she had a dream that same night that someone hit her head with a stick and that was the end of her! If God ordains your travel, no matter what the devil does, 'the travel door' will open. If there are hindrances such as curses and witchcraft manipulations, God can reveal it and show us what needs to be done... As a result, *Akwantuo Akwankyerε* (Ritual direction for travel) needs to be done to enable the process.¹³⁴

According to Vaglas, the benefits that accrue to international travel have generated a context in which prospective migrants and migrants become targets of envy and forms of supernatural harm. This situation calls on Ghanaians involved in migration to look for divine assistance so that they can evade any roadblocks or even death.

Many of my findings on Ghana's MR resonate with the findings of Daswani and others who have studied aspects of the contemporary Ghanaian religious field.¹³⁵ A typical example is what Marleen De Witte shared in her essay titled “Religious Media and Mobile Spirits”:

Apart from executing rituals for Ghanaian migrants abroad, Kofi Hande also produces binding charms, mouth powder, and other charms that help people succeed in numerous realms, including international travel. Mouth powder, he explained, helps people to convince the person you are talking to, and with an “eye charm,” on you, the person you are dealing with will be unable to resist you or deny your request. He often prepares these for people going for a visa interview at Embassies and case officers give his clientele the travel visas straight away without any further questioning.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Personal communication with Vaglas, on 9/12/2013.

¹³⁵ Daswani, "Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London," 442-74.

¹³⁶ Marleen De Witte, *Religious Media, Mobile Spirits: Publicity and Secrecy in African Pentecostalism and Traditional Religion*, *Traveling Spirits: Migrants, Markets and Mobilities* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 95.

In this connection, De Witte offers understandings into how the indigenous religious agents are isolating migration-related issues as an important area of their expertise. In essence, a growing number of Ghana's religions and their agents have taken advantage of the growing importance attached to migrating to the West in Ghana to expand their activities and their influences. The findings on religious agents and the production of MR in contemporary Ghana raises the question: what had been the relationships between the specific religions and MR?

2.3 Historical links between Ghana's Religions and Migration (MR)

The connection between the traditional religions and Ghana's emerging MR goes back to the early 18th century.¹³⁷ The traditional religious agents created worldviews that linked local travel with religious practices.¹³⁸ For example, within the Akan traditional religion, "the Asante Kings established a highly centralized civil order that identified restricted religious spaces for travellers and sojourners.¹³⁹ They made special arrangements with specific rituals for travels within the boundaries of Ashanti, which in a cosmological sense would not endanger the travellers or annoy the gods or the supreme God (*Onyankopɔn*)."¹⁴⁰ As part of the civil order, "the Kings established travel shrines, a network of royal roads, professional travellers, and articulated modes of distance trading."¹⁴¹ The order provided "sacred crossings" for strangers and sojourners and included the notion that within this worldview, the stranger was allowed a restricted space for protection, ancestral veneration, and safe travel.¹⁴² With this practice, the Kings created a relationship between the Akan traditions and local travelling, thereby establishing a local or internal MR in Ghana.

The link between traditional religions and MR continued into the 20th century. Werbner states that "beginning in the 20th century, a remarkable relationship between the influx of specific personal security cults and a variety of indigenous shrines became part of the southbound traffic of people from the north of Ghana into the Asante Kingdom and Akan rural and urban areas."¹⁴³ The local travel culture produced ritual spaces that informed the

¹³⁷ de Bruijn, Djik, and Djik, 65-68; Jean Marie Allman, and John Parker, *Tongnaab : The History of a West African God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 143-81.

¹³⁸ de Bruijn, Djik, and Djik, 75.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 79.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Perbi; Ivor Wilks, "On Mentally Mapping out Greater Asante: A Study of Time and Motion," *Journal of African History* 33, no. 1 (1992).

¹⁴² de Bruijn, Djik, and Djik, 79.

¹⁴³ Werbner, 86.

travel cosmology for people of north and south in Ghana.¹⁴⁴ According to Werbner, the travellers journeyed with personal security cults.¹⁴⁵ The cults were meant to guide the travellers by providing ritually protected corridors and a worldview that connected the living and ancestral through the journey to the south.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, along with the import of people and labour from the north to the south, “came shrines, *materia sacra*, cultural codes, and ritual activities.”¹⁴⁷ At this time, the cults with “shrines in the north such as the *Talis' Bolga* cult or the *Tigare* anti-witchcraft cult from *Wa* (Upper West region of Ghana) “established ‘satellite travel shrines’ in southern Ghana to speak to the needs of the southbound migrations.”¹⁴⁸

Although “the strangers of the north were perceived in terms of great social distance, the cosmological powers and prowess of their travel shrines showed in their ability to venture into bushes and forests and travel safely resonated deeply in the Ashanti culture.”¹⁴⁹ Consequently, the possibilities for “religiously protected travelling” and trading expanded for the southern groups and covered with wider reaches of the country.¹⁵⁰ From the historical backdrop, we can state that it is the traditional religions’ cosmologies of “religiously protected travelling” that have shaped contemporary notions of seeking religious protection and direction for international migrations to the West and the importance of religious leaders, rituals, and personal travel shrines in these migrations.¹⁵¹

In recent research (conducted between 1990s and 2013), Parish identified over 30 anti-witchcraft shrines, a number of personal security shrines carried over from Ghana to the West (U.S.A., France, Holland, and the U.K.).

¹⁴⁴ John Parker, "Earth and Shadow: Substance, Medicine and Mobility in the History of Ghana's Tongnaab Shrines," *Anthropology & Medicine* 18, no. 2 (2011): 257-70; Allman, 143-81.

¹⁴⁵ Werbner.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ de Bruijn, 80.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 75-80.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 80; Perbi, 72-86.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

She shows that most of the shrines carried over by ritual agents (migrants and itinerant ritual experts) for the protection of themselves and relatives are for destroying witchcraft believed to prevent the migrants from attaining their goals in the West.¹⁵² She also researched how some of these Ghanaian migrants developed their own private rituals in an attempt to locate personal financial security and protection to supplement the magical powers of the talismans they buy from itinerant traditional ritual experts in Ghana and other parts of West Africa.¹⁵³ Tracing the history of the relationship between MR and Ghana's traditional religions, we can state that the contemporary travel shrines, personal security cults, and use of ritual paraphernalia (talismans, charms, and special ritual items) in Ghana's MR is a contribution of Ghanaian traditions to the practice.

Christianity is another religion that has had a continuous relationship with Ghana's MR and contributes distinct elements to contemporary practice. The arrival of Christianity enhanced the notion of a wider world of travel among local Ghanaian populations. Their provision of missionary education, health facilities, and possession of foreign materials produced awe, respect, and the desire to become part of that world.¹⁵⁴ Robert Hefner has pointed out that "conversion into Christianity then also meant a cultural conversion into a different world."¹⁵⁵

Moreover, "Western 'missionization' in the late 1880s by the established Christian churches (the Roman Catholic, Basel Mission and the Methodist, but also missionary Pentecostal churches from England and the United States) brought new vistas of modernity."¹⁵⁶ This modernity "promised an enticing world where skills could be acquired

¹⁵²Parish, "Social Suffering and Anxiety: Deciphering Coughs and Colds at Akan Anti-Witchcraft Shrines in Paris."; "West African Witchcraft, Wealth and Moral Decay in New York City."; "Chasing Celebrity: Akan Witchcraft and New York City."; "Circumventing Uncertainty in the Moral Economy: West African Shrines in Europe, Witchcraft and Secret Gambling."; "Antiwitchcraft Shrines among the Akan: Possession and the Gathering of Knowledge."

¹⁵³ "Witchcraft, Riches and Roulette: An Ethnography of West African Gambling in the UK," *Ethnography* 6, no. 1 (2005): 111.

¹⁵⁴ J. Goody, *Religion, Social Change and the Sociology of Conversion*, ed. J. Goody, Changing Social Structure in Ghana: Essays in the Comparative Sociology of a New State and an Old Tradition (London: International African Institute, 1975); Birgit Meyer, "Translating the Devil, an African Appropriation of Pietist Protestantism: The Case of the Peki Ewe in Southern Ghana, 1847-1992" (University of Amsterdam, 1995); *Christian Mind and Worldly Matters: Religion and Materiality in the Nineteenth Century Gold Coast*, ed. R. Fardon and R. van Dijk W. van Binsbergen, *Modernity on a Shoestring: Dimensions of Globalization, Consumption and Development in Africa and Beyond* (London: Leiden: ASC, 1999).

¹⁵⁵ Hefner.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

and fortunes made.”¹⁵⁷ More importantly, in 1900, “Christianity facilitated access to a wider world for increasing numbers of Ghanaians and encouraged many to migrate to the U.S.A. and the U.K. often in search of education.”¹⁵⁸

In addition, the local appropriations of Christianity in Ghana enabled a different context for the interconnection between religion and migration. The local appropriations were in the form of “independent prophetic-healing churches popularly known as the *sunsum sɔré* which began in their large numbers in the 1930's and 1940's.”¹⁵⁹ The churches syncretically combined elements from Christianity with traditional notions and practices especially concerning healing and deliverance.¹⁶⁰ Catering to the needs of the rural-to-urban migrants, “the churches spread rapidly through activities of itinerant prophets.”¹⁶¹ Many of these migrants settled in the fast developing cities of Kumasi, Accra, and Cape Coast.¹⁶² From a historical point of view, these *sunsum sɔré* represent a continuation and transformation of the earlier personal security cults and traditional shrines. Similarly, “with the use of water, concoctions, herbs, candles, rings, and statues, the *sunsum sɔrés* offered a Christian version of ritual protection in a wide variety of places to an ever-increasing number of the migrants.”¹⁶³

The historical backdrop to the relationship between Ghanaian migrations and religious practices toward such travels demonstrates the distinct changes and differences Ghana's religions make to MR. The relationships show that MR is specific, particularistic, and distinct to the tradition that produces it. The point of this overview is to also show that the link between the Ghanaian religions and MR is not new. It has historical antecedents. It has undergone heightened transformations due to the differences in geographical scale and the different groups that have emerged. What this means is that historically, travel agendas and experiences have enabled forms of religiosity that were aimed at enhancing travelling agendas. In this relationship, migration shapes religious practices while religion facilitates and provides a moral impetus for migrations.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ de Bruijn, 85.

¹⁵⁹ R.W. Wyllie, *Spiritism in Ghana: A Study of New Religious Movements*, vol. 21, A.A.R. Studies in Religion (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1980), 120-39.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ de Bruijn.

2.4 Conclusion

Arguing that an emerging MR is a distinctive feature of contemporary Ghanaian religious life, I have discussed some general indicators of the current Ghanaian approaches to religion and travel. I demonstrated the emerging approaches as a response to the growing importance Ghanaians are attaching to international travels for business, education, visit, and other purposes especially in the West, in the midst of the barriers against such travels. I demonstrated that because of the growing importance attached to migration and the challenges associated with the process, Ghanaians who want to migrate to the West seek help from specific religious agents who have specialized in the practice in Ghana.

More importantly, the Chapter discussed how Ghanaian religious institutions have identified overseas migration as an area for important religious practices. Tracing the genesis of the practice, I showed that the link between migration and religion is not new in Ghana. Religious rituals and narratives have long been essential aspects of the different patterns of migrations in Ghana. What was new and unique was the scope and complexity with which the religious agents have taken the centre stage to devise and frame strategic and specific ritual practices as well as narratives to facilitate international migration. Another aspect is how Ghana' prospective migrants and migrants overseas have identified, and are engaging specific religious institutions and their agents, particularly for overseas migration purposes. The findings in the Chapter imply that the relationship between religion and migration is producing particular religious practices, and thus, the practices have historical antecedents. The findings also imply that there is an economic motivation for the practices. In the Chapters that follow, I demonstrate how these developments are unfolding in the practices of the two Pentecostal traditions covered in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POWER CHAPEL AND MIGRATION-CENTRED RITUALS IN GHANA

3.0 Introduction

The Power Chapel in Kumasi (PCK), one of Ghana's neo-Prophetic Pentecostal churches, has a worship tradition that exemplifies Ghana's MR. The Church has a reputation in Ghana and among the Ghanaian migrants abroad for its emphasis on migration or travel-related challenges and the efficacy of its rituals in eliminating these challenges. Its founder and leader, Victor Kusi-Boateng, has garnered both local and global fame as a spiritual expert on international migration concerns. Stories about how he miraculously transformed peoples' overseas migration or travel plans that were "getting nowhere" leading to their successful migration circulate in Ghana and Ghana's diaspora in the West. The PCK's specific focus on migration rituals and the international fame of its leader as an expert on relieving migration-related challenges led to my decision to focus on the Church in my thesis.

I focus on the rituals of the PCK in making three related arguments. First, participants view rituals such as the "Token of passport" as mechanisms through which ritual experts (prophets) channel the Holy Spirit to enable migration plans and eliminate their roadblocks. For individuals already in the middle of their migration plans, the prophecies offer insights into the possible ways in which their plans will unfold and what they ought to do at different stages of their migration process to realize their objectives. Participation in such rituals makes prospective migrants bolder and more certain about achieving their goals for migration.

Second, rituals such as prophecies that reveal happenings in the spirit world and future events produce prospective migrants, in that, they provide the inspiration and impetus for people to initiate migration plans. In other words, the impulse to migrate to the West is often a prophecy revealing that the people must migrate to the West as part of a divinely orchestrated success programme God has promised them. Thirdly, I argue that the PCK rituals furnish for participants a congenial atmosphere in which they share stories of their failures and struggles, receive consolation, share dreams of successful migration and settlement in the West, create support networks, and receive inspiration from each other as well as the testimonies of others' successes. These practices show how rituals of the Pentecostal churches in Ghana enable international migration. Consisting of actions, words,

symbols, and ritual agents, the rituals are symbolic ways of transferring mundane roadblocks of travel to the sacred plane, to make sense of the migration experiences and facilitate the process. Such a transfer also allows for greater control over the travel processes through the ritual technologies of the PCK. While I do not intend to argue that migration-related rituals dominate the ritual practices of all Ghanaian Pentecostal churches, I maintain that this is the case with the PCK. The PCK's focus on migration-related rituals is so striking that the Church is gaining recognition in Ghana and the diaspora as "the place to seek spiritual help" when you want to migrate, or you are a migrant in need of spiritual help.

The Chapter begins with a brief review of research on migration-focused rituals in Ghana's neo-Pentecostal churches. This review will offer a background to the discussion on the PCK's migration rituals. The discussion will also enable us to see how the PCK's ritual-oriented MR offers important leads to understanding the ritual portion of the religiosity. To demonstrate my arguments in this Chapter, I will introduce the PCK as a Pentecostal institution that has strong links with Ghanaian international migrations. I will then discuss the Church's travel rituals, showing the ways in which they enable members' travel or migration plans. I will conclude the Chapter by tying together the strands of my arguments in the Chapter. My observations in the field, discussions with Kusi-Boateng, and the responses of 22 participants formed the basis for the discussions offered in the Chapter. The participants claimed they were seeking to benefit, or had benefitted from the travel rituals and other forms of migration-related practices of the Church in their previous or recent migration ventures.

3.1 Migration Rituals in Ghana's neo-Pentecostalism

Ghana's Pentecostal Christianity has different manifestations. They include the AICs (African Indigenous/Initiated Churches), the Classical Pentecostals, and the neo-Pentecostals. Churches belonging to the neo-Pentecostal variant include the neo-Prophetic churches.¹⁶⁴ They are neo-Prophetic because of their emphasis on prophecies and the role the

¹⁶⁴Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 1, no. 15 (2014); C. N. Omenyo and A. O. Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana," *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 1, no. 1 (2006); Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism. The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, Archives De Sciences Sociales Des Religions (Accra-Ghana: CPCS, 2003), 45-69.

prophets.¹⁶⁵ Since their rise in the late 1970s, Ghanaian neo-Prophetic ministries have viewed international migration as an activity that requires ritual attention.¹⁶⁶

Various scholars show how the neo-Prophetic ritual agents include “overseas travel rituals” in their ritual practices.¹⁶⁷ For instance, van Dijk describes how through “sending and receiving rituals,” the ritual agents shape transnational relations and cater to the spiritual needs of Ghanaian prospective migrants and migrants.¹⁶⁸ Gifford describes special ritual services that Ghanaian neo-Pentecostal prophets such as Elisha Salifu-Amoako organized for prospective migrants in the 1990s.¹⁶⁹ Gifford notes how the prophet asked prospective travellers to bring their passports or their passport photos for special anointing rituals so that their travel visa acquisition processes would proceed smoothly.¹⁷⁰ Daswani also asserts that migration has become an area for special ritual concern among the Ghanaian Pentecostals.¹⁷¹ Daswani identifies two dimensions of the special rituals. He notes how on one hand, prospective migrants go to Pentecostal prayer camps to pray and fast for success in their migrations.¹⁷² He also adds that on the other hand, Ghanaian Pentecostal prophets frame rituals to motivate and facilitate international travel.¹⁷³

Although still scanty, research on Pentecostal travel rituals in Ghana shows that because of the growing importance Ghanaians are attaching to international migration, rituals intended to make it easier for individuals involved in international migration are increasingly occupying an important place in the repertory of rituals in the churches. The research also provides clues to how important rituals are in Ghana’s neo-Pentecostal form of MR which other scholars have treated cursorily. The ‘ritual orientedness’ of MR, which

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 93.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. van Dijk, 143; Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 90-96.

¹⁶⁸ van Dijk, 143.

¹⁶⁹ Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, 93.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. See also, Quayesi-Amakye; “Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana” (University of Cape Coast, 2009). Ghanaian Pentecostal neo-Prophets and their churches refer to what Quayesi-Amakye defines as the fifth phase of Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophetism; the group emerged in the early 1990s in Ghana.

¹⁷¹ Daswani, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility.”

¹⁷² *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 86-87.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 88-89.

scholars have cursorily treated, is a central element of the discussion I offer in this Chapter. I will also show that PCK's MR ritual practice follows a neo-Pentecostal ritual culture, thus, what is unique about their practice is how they single out and design special ritual conferences annually and other practices, specifically for overseas migration.

3.2 The Power Chapel in Kumasi

The PCK is one of the neo-Prophetic churches in Ghana.¹⁷⁴ The neo-prophetic churches emerged in the 1990s.¹⁷⁵ The churches ground their beliefs and practices in Ghanaian traditional worldviews and combine some ritual aspects of the AICs and elements of the other Pentecostal variants.¹⁷⁶ Their striking emphasis on prophecy and the inclinations towards indigenous flavour of rituals distinguish them from the other groups of Ghanaian Pentecostalism.¹⁷⁷ The term Prophetic, which is used to identify these churches also reflects their emphasis on prophecy and the way they describe their leaders as Prophets and Seers.¹⁷⁸ The Prophets are also noted for their healing, deliverance activities, and use of ritual objects such as olive oil, salt, sugar, and water.¹⁷⁹

Invariably, the local appropriation of prophetism in Ghana's neo-prophetic churches for travel was a practice that began among the older Pentecostal and prophetic traditions, including the *Sunsum Sɔre* or AICs in the 1930's and 1940's.¹⁸⁰ The itinerant prophets of the *Sunsum Sɔre* catered to the needs of the rural-to-urban migrants.¹⁸¹ Through their use of water, concoctions, herbs, candles, rings and statues, they offered healing and ritual

¹⁷⁴ I will be using PCK to represent the particular Power Chapel group I researched in Kumasi, Ghana for this Chapter. PCK is the Church's headquarters, popularly known as the Power Cathedral. However, PCW represents the Church both in Ghana and abroad as indicated on the Church's website.

¹⁷⁵ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Studies of Religion in Africa (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 36-53; Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, 90; Wyllie, 21; Meyer.

¹⁷⁶ Omenyo and Atiemo, 429; Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2001); Cephas Omenyo, "New Wine in an Old Bottle? Charismatic Healing in the Mainline Churches in Ghana," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ogbu Kalu, "Yabbing the Pentecostals: Paul Gifford's Image of Ghana's New Christianity," *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* 1, no. 15 (2005); Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: CPCS, 2001).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Quayesi-Amakye, "Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," 108-10.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ de Bruijn, Djik, and Djik; Wyllie, 21.

¹⁸¹ de Bruijn, Djik, and Djik, 81.

protection in a wide variety of places to an ever-increasing numbers of migrants in Ghana.¹⁸² The neo-prophetic churches have continued this tradition of addressing needs of populations on the move by renewing the older prophetic rituals.¹⁸³ They are, however, associated more with international migration, which is the current migration pattern in Ghana. Gifford and others note how the neo-prophetic churches have held a “strong appeal for people who have difficulties in persuading Western embassies of their genuine intentions to travel overseas, since their emergence in the 1990s.”¹⁸⁴ The strong appeal marked the beginning of the neo-Prophetic form of MR in Ghana.

Beginning in the 1990s as a prayer fellowship, Kusi-Boateng registered the PCK as a neo-Prophetic Pentecostal Church in October 2001. Before he established the PCK, the founder, Kusi-Boateng or “Papa” (as worshippers affectionately call him), was a member of the Kumasi-Asokwa Baptist church. Responding to what he described as “a call to God’s service,” he dropped out of secondary school and started proselytizing in nearby secondary schools with a circle of friends.¹⁸⁵ As they gained acceptance and popularity in the schools, Kusi-Boateng, and his friends extended their activities to various university campuses in Kumasi.¹⁸⁶ However, the leaders of the *Asokwa* Baptist Church opposed these evangelistic activities.¹⁸⁷ Consequently, Kusi-Boateng and his friends broke away and formed a new group called the New Generation Chapel.

According to the PCK tradition, in 1998, Kusi-Boateng received directives from God, “to step out into something new and begin shepherding the lives of worshippers” by establishing a church.¹⁸⁸ Following this directive, Kusi-Boateng started a prayer and an evangelistic group that was called God's Power Ministries.¹⁸⁹ This Cell group used the auditorium of the Sugar Hill hotel in Kumasi for its meetings. In 2001, Kusi-Boateng

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ I must note here that most of the neo-Prophetic churches started as prayer fellowships between 1980s and 1990s. Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, 90-102; Omenyo and Atiemo, 45-55; Daswani, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-) Mobility,” 67-82.

¹⁸⁵ Kusi-Boateng dropped out of school partly due to the death of his father and hardship his mother encountered as a widow with eight children. He said as the first child, he had to make way for his younger ones to have the opportunity to go to school.

¹⁸⁶ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng at the PCK on 6/03/2014.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

transformed the fellowship into a church with the name Power Chapel.¹⁹⁰ From its inception, the PCK identified international migration as an activity in crucial need of its ritual labour.

The organizing of intensive prayer and fasting rituals for Ghanaians migrating to the West was a routine activity of the Church. Kusi-Boateng said the reason for such routine practice was that he understood the pain and frustration in the process. He said he had similar visa denial experiences with the Canadian and Netherlands embassies in Accra, Ghana when he wanted to travel in the late 1990s. He had every document required for the applications and even had attached invitation letters from his overseas friends. However, the embassy denied him the travel visas several times. He added that he felt defeated by the experiences and nearly gave up on travelling abroad, altogether. Believing that “these visa issues had spiritual causes,” he and the members underwent prolonged fasting and intensive prayers to God, seeking divine intervention. Only then, did “Travel doors” to the West “opened up” for him and others.¹⁹¹

Currently, Kusi-Boateng travels overseas more than five times in a year, “85% of these travels are for mission purposes, and 15% are for business purposes.”¹⁹² He linked his ability to travel “anywhere on the globe nowadays to divine intervention.” He emphasized that his personal experience with using rituals to secure travel visas and to solve various migration-related challenges inspired him to help others achieve success with their travel and migration projects:

Personally, I have sent loads of people outside for education and business. I have also bought thousands of dollars’ worth of tickets for people who do not have money to buy their travel tickets... For others, I had to secure travel visas for them... I have been in their situation before, and so I know their frustrations... Therefore, travel challenges are crucial issues we deal with here, now and then... Hey, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.¹⁹³

In his statement, Kusi-Boateng explains that he provides financial assistance for members with travel ambitions and his reasons for the attention he gives to such members. The statement and historical backdrop provide understandings into why the PCK has identified migration-related concerns as crucial part of its activities.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Personal communication with Laud Moffat. He is the Special Assistant to the Prophet Kusi-Boateng on 6/03/2014.

¹⁹³ Personal communication with Prophet Kusi-Boateng.

The PCK's success in resolving challenges associated with international migration enhanced the Church's appeal in Ghana and many countries in Africa. Consequently, the PCK experienced a dramatic increase in the number of worshippers. The majority of these worshippers were youth with migration aspirations.¹⁹⁴ The increase in membership necessitated the relocation of the nascent church from the Sugar Hill hotel to its current premises at the IPT junction in *Asuoyeboah*, Kumasi in 2002. Figure 8 and 9, show pictures of "Papa" and the PCK's current premises at the IPT junction *Asuoyeboah* in Kumasi (inside views).



Figure 8. Prophet Kusi-Boateng

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.



Figure 9. An inside (upstairs) view of the Power Cathedral at Asuoyeboah IPT Junction in Kumasi

Upon arriving at the IPT junction one is greeted by a huge signpost on the left side. The signpost has the inscription, "Power Chapel Worldwide."¹⁹⁵ According to Laud, the phrase "worldwide" is "an indication of the church's internationalization mission."¹⁹⁶ The PCK's mission is that members should travel and have business connections anywhere in the world, "because the earth is the Lord's."¹⁹⁷ Another member added, as a church, "we (they) are going global, and we cannot do that without the people who really understand the vision of the church."¹⁹⁸ These assertions reflect the understandings of many neo-prophetic churches in Ghana and underscore their pre-occupation with facilitating migrations abroad. It has even become a common practice of these neo-prophetic churches to add phrases such as "worldwide," "international," and "global" to their names to indicate to their clientele, their guarantee of a religiously inspired access to the West.¹⁹⁹ The point here is that the ardour of churches such as the PCK to internationalize is in part encouraging their preoccupation with motivating and facilitating migrations abroad.

¹⁹⁵Personal communication with Mr Laud Moffat (a senior procurement officer at the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly and the special Assistant to the Prophet Kusi-Boateng) on 12/03/2014.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Asare; Otobil; Dijk.

The PCK has continued to enjoy steady growth in Ghana and its diaspora. By March 2014, it had a local membership of over 5000 and a global membership of about 20, 000.²⁰⁰ The Church has branches in overseas countries including the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and the U.K.²⁰¹ The branches of the Church were established by members who travelled and benefited from Kusi-Boateng's ritual prowess, or received his prophecy to set up the Church overseas. Its global membership shows that about 75% of the Church is overseas. The numbers show that PCK continues to offer its migrant members spiritual support. The growth of PCK is linked to its internationalizing agenda. It achieves this by encouraging worshippers to travel overseas for education and business, or to migrate to the West. Kusi-Boateng also trains a cadre of prophets known as his "spiritual sons and daughters," who frequently travel to perform rituals overseas and establish the Church.

More importantly, the PCK's global outreach has led to an increase in its fortunes. Its grand modern-style chapel is a testimony to the tremendous wealth that flows into its coffers from its increasing membership in the Ghanaian diaspora. The church also invests heavily in modern communications technology like TV, Radio, the internet and the various social media to enable it broadcast activities taking place live in Kumasi, to a worldwide audience. With this technology, local worshippers and those living in far-flung locations, participate simultaneously in all of the Church's events, that is, local and overseas. Moreover, while PCK's growing status as a "mega church" in Ghana was a source of its appeal to many, its leader's preoccupation with rituals for people migrating draws the attention of individuals with migration aspirations to it.²⁰²

3.3 The Migration-Focused Ritual Culture at the PCK

I now turn to ritual practices performed to enable international migration at the PCK. At the Church, an entire week is lit up with religious rituals. The rituals occur in the context of all-night deliverance services, routine worship, conferences, and retreats. More importantly, the Church has specific rituals for international travels, which I observed or participated in between 2013 and 2015. They performed both public and private rituals. Those performed publicly took two forms, annual and incidental. They performed the rituals at specific times

²⁰⁰ Personal communication with Mr Laud Moffat.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features".

yearly and incidentally because specific incidences called for those rituals. There were verbal and non-verbal actions and processes in the public rituals.²⁰³ In the following subsections, I discuss the two forms of public (travel) rituals to demonstrate the actions and processes of the travel rituals. I will also examine how they facilitate international migration. The last section of the discussion examines the private rituals to show how apart from the public rituals the Church reserves one-on-one travel rituals for individuals upon demand.

3.3.1 Annual (Public) Rituals for international migration: “The Token of Passports”

The annual (public) rituals for international travel that I observed at the PCK between 2014 and 2015 were organized under the theme “Token of passport.” These ritual sessions were part of the Church’s annual “Signs and Tokens” conferences. The Power Cathedral in Kumasi was the venue for these conferences. Figure 10 shows a picture of the posters for some of the annual “Signs and Tokens” conferences at the PCK.



Figure 10. PCK “Signs and Tokens” annual conferences

²⁰³ There were also verbal and non-verbal processes with the private rituals for migration but those were not very obvious compared to those performed in public. This was because the prophets instructed individuals to perform those rituals privately.

In the parlance of the PCK, a conference is a gathering of worshippers for intensive prayers, textual performances (readings and discussion of scriptures) and other related ritual practices. The gathering is aimed at addressing pressing spiritual and material problems.²⁰⁴ The conferences last between two to eight days. Each day has one or more ritual sessions with each session addressing a different spiritual or material problem. As part of the ritual practices for these conferences, Kusi-Boateng mandates participants to engage in spells of fasting during the conferences to prepare themselves spiritually. Prophets of the PCK preside over these important rituals.

In addition to the prophets, the church especially invites renowned prophets from Ghana, Zimbabwe, and other overseas countries to lead in some of the rituals.²⁰⁵ Often, the invitees are specialists in dealing with the specific challenges addressed at the conferences. These “Megastar prophets,” as they are known in the African Pentecostal parlance, draw large crowds of participants and help to propel the image of the PCK in positive ways. The Church organizes the conferences around very broad themes—reflecting pressing spiritual or material problems. The answers sought to these problems often came in the form of prophecies declared by the ritual specialists. The prophecies are often prognoses to causes of current situations or in the form of predictions or forecast of future happenings. The practice of inviting ritual experts from outside Ghana for such ritual conferences shows how Ghana’s Pentecostalism transcends national borders. What is more important is that the invitation and participation in the Pentecostal MR is not limited to Ghana and Ghana’s Pentecostalism. The invitee prophets are experts in such practices in their homelands. It also shows that because of the ritual, Kusi-Boateng draws leaders and members from Africa and elsewhere. Invariably, these Pentecostal “prophets are mainly local intercessors in a global traffic of Pentecostal power, ideas, and people.”²⁰⁶

The PCK organizes the “Signs and Tokens” conferences every year in the month of July.²⁰⁷ The duration is eight days. The ritual items or “tokens” used at these conferences

²⁰⁴ Personal communication with Laud Moffat on 06/03/ 2014.

²⁰⁵ Kusi-Boateng has strong ties with Pentecostals in Zimbabwe and has spiritual sons and daughters there. He has trained many prophets there and sent many abroad. This ties explains why in the Australian Diaspora, we will see, Zimbabwean migrants serve as key persons of the Church in Diaspora.

²⁰⁶ Daswani, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-) Mobility,” 69.

²⁰⁷ “Signs and Tokens Conference 2014” Day 7 at PCK. https://youtu.be/weYHl_ubfUQ?t=1h13m45s (Accessed 04/08/2014).

range from bottled water, olive oil, honey, sugar, salt, key, fruits, bread, pepper, white handkerchiefs, national flags, and passports. The sessions devoted to international travel and business connections are dubbed the “Token of passport.”²⁰⁸ This is because ritual objects used for these sessions include passports, passport application forms, and passport pictures. According to Kusi-Boateng, the ritual objects are travel documents that serve as materials that people use to access travel visas, thus, are the essential items to use in rituals for invoking spiritual access to international travel.²⁰⁹

The “Token of passport” rituals mark the climax of the “Signs and Tokens” conferences. The final days of the conferences are devoted to these rituals. According to the Church’s tradition, worshippers’ most pressing needs are addressed during the later sessions of the conferences especially after other rituals have created the enabling spiritual environment.²¹⁰ Devoting the final days to international migration signifies the respectful attention the Church reserves for this activity. Some worshippers explained why the PCK organizes its rituals according to such systematic schema during the “Signs and Tokens” conference. They said the rituals performed during the early days of the week are intended to purify worshippers so that they become worthy of receiving blessings from God on the seventh day. These blessings guarantee “breakthroughs” for many, in their individual migration plans.²¹¹

The themes for the “Signs and Tokens” conferences also convey the importance attached to migration. The 2014 and 2015 conference themes dubbed “Oh Lord, let my ‘helpers’ (people that will materially help the migration process) come from the North, South, East, and West” and “It is time to move from where you are to where you have to be,” respectively, are examples. Ritual symbols for travel have also become key symbols compared to the other symbols for the conferences, an indication that the Church views migration issues as very central to its ritual focus. Many of my interlocutors explained that their reason for partaking in the conferences was mainly the inclusion of such symbols in the posters, flyers, and banners. Essentially, the Church identifies with people who have travel issues and demonstrates its specialization and emphasis in the area. Figure 11 shows the

²⁰⁸ Telephone communication with Laud Moffat at the PCK on 12/09/ 2015.

²⁰⁹ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng at the PCK on 6/03/ 2014.

²¹⁰ Telephone communication with Laud Moffat on 18/08/ 2014.

²¹¹ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng.

picture of the 2014 “Signs and Tokens” conferences, emphasizing passports as the first of its ritual symbols.



Figure 11. A poster of the 2014 "Signs and Tokens" Conference" (passport as the first ritual symbol)

I identified two main ritual actions and processes during the “Token of passport” rituals, and all were directed toward international migrations. There were verbal and non-verbal forms of ritual actions. The verbal actions involved processes such as prophecies from the prophets to individual worshippers and the entire congregation. The prophet asked the congregation to read aloud what they refer to as the “prophetic declarations” from inscriptions of written prophecies specifically for international travel. During the declarations and prophecies, the prophets would invoke the “powers of travel” and curse the “forces or roadblocks against travel ambitions” of the participants.

3.3.1.1 Verbal Actions and the “Token of Passport” Rituals

In the PCK, the “Token of Passport” is a ritual practice where “the Church prays against anything that hinders the opening of ‘international doors’ and for the acceptance of travel visas whenever applied.”²¹² Commenting on the popularity of the “Token of passport” rituals,

²¹² Personal communication with Laud Moffat at the PCK on 13/03/2014.

Prophet Hyeaman, one of the invitee prophets for the conference said that "these rituals, more than any other rituals define the Church."²¹³ People associate the Church with the 'passport' rituals."²¹⁴ A day before the "Token of passport" rituals, Kusi-Boateng reminds the congregation to come to Church with their travel documents. For instance, the day before the 2014 "Token of passport" rituals, Kusi-Boateng asked all members who desired to travel or knew of anyone with such ambitions to come with their travel documents or write their names on any plain paper. Almost every worshipper who had a passport brought it to Church. Some worshippers hurriedly completed their applications for passports and came to the service with the passport application forms. Even more interesting was the case of those worshippers who made a point of applying for travel visas prior to the conference so that they could come to the "Token of Passports" ritual section of the conference with copies of their visa application forms.

During the days for the "Token of passport" travel rituals in both the 2014 and 2015 "Signs and Tokens" conferences, all major roads leading to the Church were jammed in a bumper-to-bumper fashion, with cars carrying worshippers to the event.²¹⁵ Smaller streets leading to the PCK were choked with worshippers dressed in beautiful clothing.²¹⁶ Worshippers chatted excitedly as they walked to the PCK premises trading their evaluations of the previous days' events or testimonies of their experiences of the Holy Spirit with each other. Many also shared their dreams of travelling abroad to each other.²¹⁷

A mixture of noises from the drumming and singing in the Church, blurring of horns from vehicles entering the Church premises, conversations of the members and street vendors selling their items, pierced the evening air.²¹⁸ Particularly, excitement filled the atmosphere at the 2014 "Token of passport" ritual session as over 4000 worshippers turned out for this event.²¹⁹ The throng of congregants who turned up for this event is an indication of the seriousness attached to migrating and travels to the West for various purposes in

²¹³Personal communication with Prophet Hyeaman at the PCK on 23/03/2014. Hyeaman is one of the organizers and Prophets who feature annually at the "Signs and Tokens" Conferences.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Telephone communication with Atta Awuni, an usher at the PCK on 28/07/ 2014.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Telephone communication with Mr Awuah, one of the security personnel at the PCK on 29/072014.

²¹⁸ Telephone communication with Bruce; a participant from Melbourne, Australia on 27/07/ 2014.

²¹⁹ Telephone communication with Moffat on 12/08/2014.

Ghana.²²⁰ The huge crowd also speaks to the sense of the urgency to enlist the supernatural in dealing with such issues. In all, four prophets—Hubert and Beverley Angel (a couple from Zimbabwe), Gilbert Hyeaman, and Kusi-Boateng ministered to the congregation. The all-night ritual event started at 9:00pm and ended at 5:00am the next morning.

A three-hour long praise and worship session marked the beginning of the travel rituals. Worshippers sang, clapped, prayed aloud, spoke in tongues, stomped their feet on the ground and danced in frenzied states during this session. When the session was over, Kusi-Boateng mounted a platform and introduced the Prophets who would officiate during the “Token of passport” ritual that night. The PCK’s tradition is to have a prophet lead the events of each night during the weeklong conference. On this night, however, although the prophet in charge of affairs was Beverly, four other prophets assisted, taking turns to minister. Hubert Angel was the first prophet for the night. After an hour of ministration, Prophet Hubert left the platform for his wife (Beverly) to continue the prophetic ministration, she ministered for two hours and Prophet Hyeaman took over.

Whenever the officiating Prophet would hand over the microphone to any of the other Prophets, the congregation would go into frenzy, shouting, whistling, and clapping to the accompaniment of drumming and music. While each Prophet would be leading the congregation in prayers, the others, including Kusi-Boateng would be laying hands on the heads of worshippers and anointing their heads with olive oil. While prophecies offer insights into how worshippers’ migration plans would unfold, the other ritual actions [anointing with oil and laying of hands on worshippers' heads] are intended to neutralize the powers of demons believed to be responsible for roadblocks in migration plans. During the prophecies, the prophets would invoke the “powers of travel” and curse the “forces or roadblocks against travel ambitions” of the participants. Non-verbal actions were part of some of these verbal actions, particularly, the declarations. Members had to wave mini-flags of their resident nations and that of the country one desires to travel to and raise their passports. One non-verbal action that prophet Hyeaman introduced in 2015 was for prospective migrants to present specific amounts of money he mentioned, come to the front of the congregation, and stand in the fourteen bottles of water he had poured on the floor. He implored the people to hold [seed money] while standing in the water. I discuss in the following, a detailed

²²⁰ Personal communication with Erik, a personal driver of Kusi-Boateng at the PCK on 27/07/2014.

account of these actions. Figure 12 shows a presentation of the Token of Passports Ritual process.

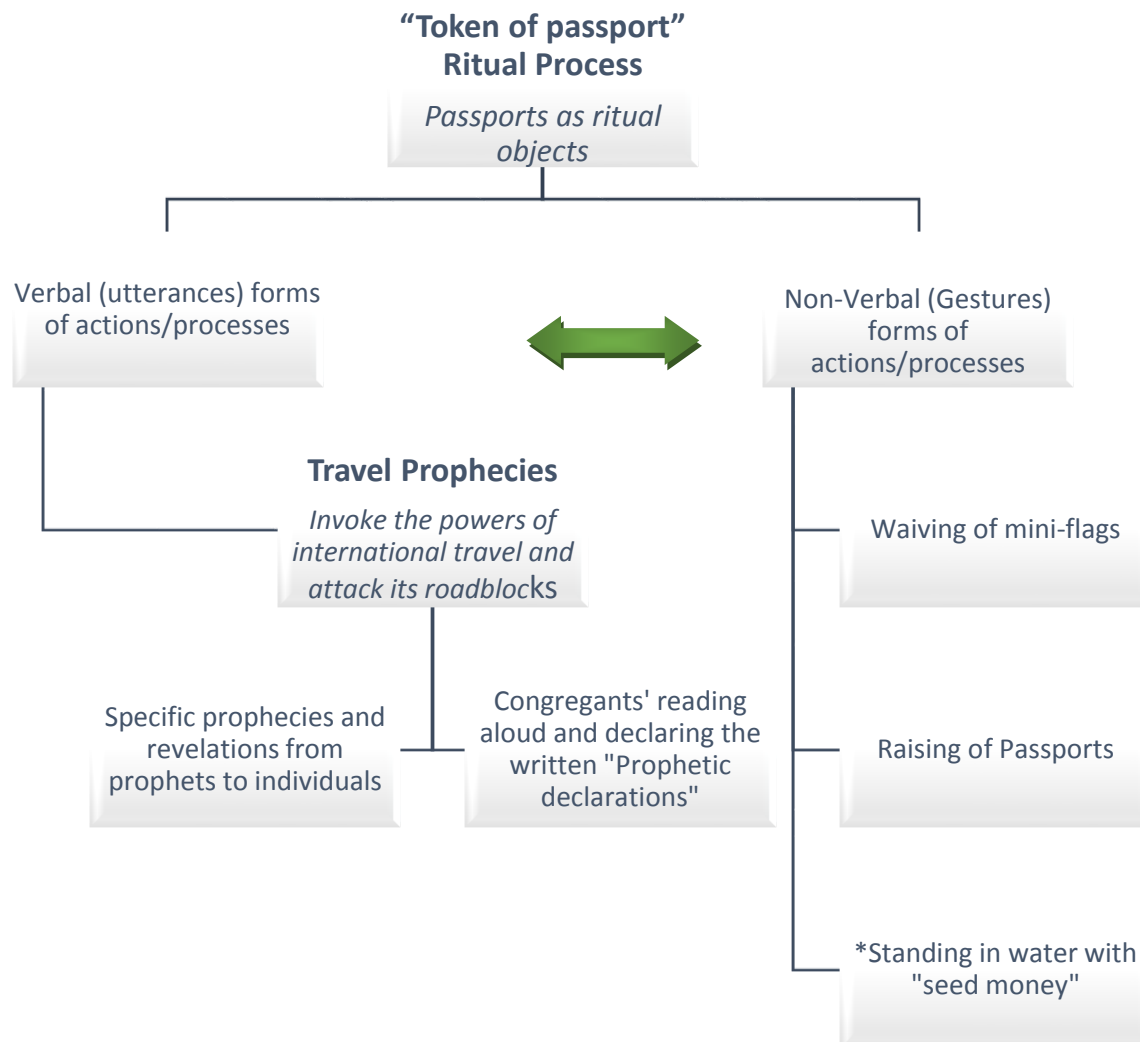


Figure 12. A representation of the forms and processes of rituals for the “Token of passport” annual travel rituals

Figure 13 shows the “prophetic declarations” in the leaflet for the “Signs and Tokens,” 2014 brochure. The leaflet also describes the activities that constitute the “Token of passport” rituals.

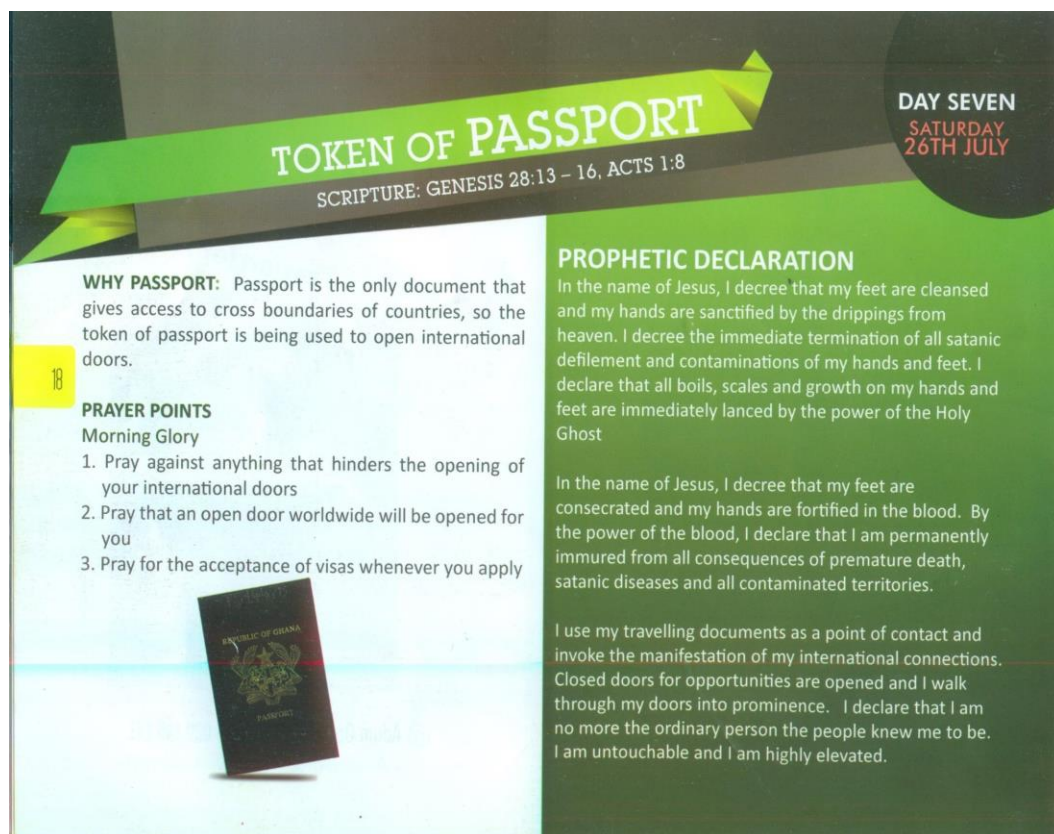


Figure 13. The "Token of passport" leaflet

The leaflet shows the new meaning the PCK attaches to passports. Before his sermon for the 2015 "Token of Passports" rituals entitled "Passports," Prophet Hyeaman defined passport as "the official item that provides identification and access."²²¹ He explained that "a passport from a nation can open or close or provide limited doors of opportunities for you (a person)... and it is critical in defining who you are and the opportunities you can access."²²² Moreover, for the PCK, passport is not only a "document of identification, particularly of one's nationality or citizenship, it represents the owner (prospective migrant, migrant, or traveller,) and it is involved in the official transactions (the visa process, the journey itself, the dealings with immigration officials at the points of entry) that enable travellers and migrants to cross international boundaries."²²³ The PCK has ritualized these transactions, transforming the passport, an ordinary identification object, into something sacred. From the inscriptions in the leaflet, it is clear that the passport becomes an object imbued with the power to "open

²²¹ Prophet Hyeaman's Prophetic ministration for the international travel rituals performed on the fourth day of the "Signs and Tokens" Conference, 2015.

²²² Prophet Hyeaman's Prophetic ministration for the "Signs and Tokens" Conference, 2014 and 2015.

²²³ Atossa Abrahamian, "Passports for Sale," *Dissent* 61, no. 4 (2014); David Hey, *Passports* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

international travels doors” or entry into another country, mostly a Western nation. The power of the passport determines whether a prospective traveller will gain successful entry into the desired country. The prayer points shown in Figure 14 are directives worshippers must follow when praying so that evil spiritual forces that can thwart the operations and power of the passport would neutralize. Following the prayer directives would also enable the passport to unleash its power in ways that will enhance the migration of the owner.

3.2.1.1a Prophecies for Migration

In the PCK, a prophecy is an inspired utterance of a prophet, viewed as a revelation of divine will. Prophecies can reveal to worshippers happenings in the spiritual realm that are affecting or will affect their mundane lives. This can be a spiritual causal agent of a mishap. Most of the time, prophecies are predictions of the future under divine inspiration. Such an inspired message or prediction can be transmitted orally or in writing. Prophecy is an integral ritual mechanism of the “Token of passport” ritual process. The PCK’s prophecies can be open. In open prophecies, the person being prophesied about is anonymous. The prophet would simply describe the specific details of an individual’s identity and life situation. The person whose identity and life situation fit the description accepts the prophecy as his or hers. Often they would respond, “It is me,” or stand up and walk towards the Prophet. Some prophecies are more direct, whereby the name of the person to whom it is directed is specifically mentioned. Whether open or direct, prophecies related to the migration of worshippers, offer directives that aid the smooth flow of the process. Because members accept these directives as divinely inspired orders, they pay respectful attention to them.

Some members only learn about the need to migrate or travel through prophecies. Such prophecies describe the person’s migration overseas as a part of a divine scheme in which he or she is merely participating. God wants the person to travel overseas to fulfil a divine agenda.²²⁴ Worshippers, whose migration plans are already underway, also receive revelations about how their plans would unfold, or about important events in the journey through the prophecies.²²⁵

I will discuss a few of the PCK’s notable prophecies here to illustrate these themes. The discussion will underscore the crucial niche of prophecies in Ghana’s MR. During his time

²²⁴ Personal communication with Sam at the PCK on 12/03/2014.

²²⁵ Ibid.

for ministration, Hubert started giving prophecies after leading the Church in reading aloud the written “prophetic declarations” for travel. Notable examples of his “open prophecies” include one in which he started with the statement, “there is somebody here, you are moving to another level...” and “I see you going somewhere!”²²⁶ He added a physical description of a woman, including the colour and style of her dress. A young woman rose up and said the prophecy was about her. Prophet Hubert invited her forward and addressed her. She would be travelling to Canada, establish a business there, and help to create a worshipping community. Hubert asked her to proceed with her preparations and be confident because God had already endorsed the plan. In this case, the woman received an open form of prophecy that would inspire her travel aspirations and embolden her actions because she received divine approval and directives as to the purpose of the journey.

Hubert also prophesied to specific individuals: Who is Faustina? Hubert asked, looking over the congregation searchingly. “It is me!” The woman shouted. Hubert continued beckoning the woman to come forward. “In the realm of the spirit, the Lord ministered to me that, tell Ernest... Who is Ernest?” (The prophet asked Faustina). “He is here! He is my son!” The woman interrupted. Ernest came to the front where his stepmother was standing. Hubert walked towards Ernest and continued prophesying. “God is going to shoot you to another level. The Lord says you have a love for the anointing upon the Power Chapel, but demons are trying to follow you so that they have been ‘cutting you’ from where you are going... By the anointing in this house, you will go abroad to where God wants you to be. You will establish the branch of the church there,” Hubert concluded the declaration for Ernest.²²⁷ In this prophecy, the prophet names Ernest and informs him (Ernest) for the first time about the need for him to migrate; about what he would be doing overseas—establish a successful international ministry. He receives assurance that the migration will proceed easily. In these two instances, we see that through prophecies, prospective migrants are produced and their purposes for the journeys identified.

Beckoning to another man from the crowd to come forward, Hubert offered him a declaration. “The Lord wants me to tell you that your travelling is going to be easy. By ‘Fire and by Power’ you shall not become a local voice, but a national voice and from a national

²²⁶ A recorded statement from Prophet Hubert Angel at the 2014 “Signs and Tokens Conference.”

²²⁷ Ibid.

voice to an international voice! ‘Am coming, just stand there...’” He told the man after the declaration. Then he moved on to prophesy to another person. It was a direct prophecy: “I see a lady wearing a blue Tee-shirt in the crowd and your surname is Owusu. The Lord ministered to me that He has seen your heart, and he is about to bring you to greater heights... Do you still have your passports in your hands...!”²²⁸ A woman runs to the front crying while Hubert continued prophesying. “You, I see that there is a great grace for you to travel to the Netherlands.” The woman responded. “Yes, that's where my parents are! (Her face lit with excitement as she screamed, “thank you Jesus!”). “Your parents are in Holland? (Hubert asked)... “Yes, Prophet!” (She replied)... Brenda! (The Prophet called out). I hear a name, Brenda. (He said). “Yes, that is my name!” (The woman shouted with joy while the congregation clapped their hands, shouted joyously, beat the drums, and played a few notes on the piano). “I saw many businesses taking place... I see this woman will be travelling and be coming back home...” The prophet continued his prophecy to Brenda. “Your prosperity is not in staying in another country, lady. Your prosperity is to go outside, establish your businesses; your business is global. The businesses will not be in one country; you will be travelling to three main nations...”²²⁹ I have already started, prophet.” (The woman confirmed the prophecy with an expression of joy).²³⁰ This expressive display of emotion was a feature that climaxed such prophecies throughout the travel rituals.

In this prophecy, the woman (Brenda) was already involved in the process of migrating (“I have already started.” The prophecy offered her some spiritual backing. She would proceed, confident that things will work out because “God had endorsed her plans.” Through the revelations, the travel prophecies can determine the country to travel to, business type to engage in, and the type of travel. They can also determine whether one will become either a citizen of another nation, a migrant, or a business traveller, and the possible outcome of the travel or migration. In Brenda’s case, Prophet Hubert told her that she could only travel to bring businesses to the homeland and not to stay. “Your prosperity is not

²²⁸ Ibid. https://youtu.be/weYHI_ubfUQ?t=1h43m43s (Accessed 23/09/2014).

²²⁹ Prophecy given at the PCK’s during the “Token of Passport” rituals by Prophet Hubert Angel on the 02/07/2014.

²³⁰ Ibid.

staying in another country (Netherlands) but will be, by you going and bringing something home.”²³¹

Although the PCK’s worship tradition is ritual oriented, it used biblical narratives and personal testimonies as support for the rituals. These narratives explained the meanings of the rituals, made the worshipper believe even more in their efficacy and encouraged them to participate in the ritual process. Invariably, the travel rituals [“Token of passport”] could not stand alone without narratives. The prophets model the rituals after specific migration stories and teachings from scripture. What this means is that rituals and narratives overlap in MR, at least in the case of the PCK.

Prophetess Beverly Angel offered one of such narratives as a form of prophecy, after she had led the Church to pray for twenty minutes during her two hours’ prophetic ministration. Climbing onto the stage, Beverly first asked the congregation to begin to pray, “Pray like someone who is going somewhere.” Then she started into the Story of Moses helping the Israelites to cross the Red Sea:

All the borders have been opened for you... You have already found favour in the sight of your immigration case officer... You are just like Moses and the Israelites. You know when Moses was with the children of Israel, they had to cross the red sea (sea of reeds), which is also the border, the immigration office that you are trying to secure a visa from. When Moses got to the red sea, the children of Israel were complaining bitterly that they should have remained in Egypt... Saying, 'it was better to have died where we are coming from, is this where you are bringing us so we can die now?' You are just like them. I see you going somewhere! I said I see you going somewhere! Somebody in this place is going to see the salvation of the Lord today. When Moses complained to God, guess what God said. He said, why are you crying unto me? Just tell my people to forward match! Tell my people to go across the sea! This sea is going to open and you shall pass through it. You will experience the same; you are like Moses and the Children of Israel. You too are children of God.²³²

In this form of travel prophecy, Prophetess Beverley connects the Red Sea story to the experiences of the prospective migrants drawing on similarities of their situations with those of the Israelites to bolster their confidence in the rituals. The worshippers of the PCK, like the Israelites in the story, are the children of God. Just as God issued directives to Moses to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land, migration plans of the worshippers unfold according to

²³¹ Prophecy given by Prophet Hubert to Brenda at the Token of Passports ritual section at the PCK on 01/08/2014.

²³² Prophetess Beverly Angel’s Prophetic ministration at the “Token of passport” ritual session of the “Signs and Tokens” Conference, 2014 at the PCK. https://youtu.be/weYHI_ubfUQ?t=1h53m59s. (Accessed 23/04/2015).

God's will. Just as God helped the Israelites to overcome the "barrier Red Sea," so He will remove migration barriers facing the participants. This narrative is supposed to propel the congregation to see travel as a divinely ordained venture that can be achieved via the forms of divine enablement offered them through the rituals.

Some of the narratives the prophets told them are based on the prophet's own experiences with the successful use of rituals in international migration. The Prophetess told one such story:

Listen to me! You serve a God who specializes in the impossible! Every situation to do with *this* passport you are holding in your hands today, any impossibility is changing into a possibility today. Just forward march and get into the country you want to get into, whichever country you desire to get into today... What I am holding is a British passport, not a Zimbabwean passport... I secured it through the favour and grace under the anointing of my parents Prophets Mama and Papa Kusi-Boateng! A certain grace is already here for you too; to be what you really want to be! For you to be any citizen of any nation you want to be in this universe! If you want to be a citizen of Mars, you can be a citizen of Mars, because of this anointing.²³³

As a way of demonstrating the possibility of the divine enablement worshippers sought in connection with their international migration, the Prophetess showed the congregation her British passport. This, she contends, "is a proof of the 'favour and grace' that comes with travel anointing at the PCK." In connection with migration-related rituals, the personal testimonies of Prophets and worshippers offer evidence of the efficacy of the rituals and assure members of success in their own migrations. In this way, the testimonies boost the confidence these congregants have in the rituals. Describing contemporary migration experiences and possible scenarios in terms of Biblical stories that feature the role of divine intervention in population movement provide scriptural support for the rituals. Both forms of narratives boost the confidence these congregants have in the rituals. The use of narratives also demonstrates how the church configures and builds on prior, even ancient symbols and narratives to offer justification and support for migration related rituals.

The fact that Prophetess Beverly Angel led the 2014 all-night service, with the male prophets acting as her assistants leads directly to how the PCK looks at gender in the ritual process. It also demonstrates the Church's sensitivity to the unique needs of women who are involved in migration. Unlike the classical Pentecostals who benefit immensely from the

²³³ Prophetess Beverly Angel's Prophetic ministration at the "Token of passport" ritual session of the "Signs and Tokens" Conference, 2014 at the PCK.

ministerial gifts of women, but do not have a place for them in ordained ministry, the PCK ordains women as prophets and allows the women to host the travel rituals just like male ritual experts.

The practice of having both male and female prophets feature prominently in the PCK's migration rituals, therefore, resonates with the gender ideology of the older prophetic AICs, which it has inherited.²³⁴ Moffat offers another rationale for the Church's use of Prophetesses. According to Moffat, "international migration is not for men only. Today, women have equally migrated as economic migrants, students, professionals, and for leisure or business purposes. Since migration is an experience for both, the rituals are designed to also respond to gender-specific issues in the travel process."²³⁵ When Beverly started prophesying she explained how there were specific issues prospective migrants women face in the process of migration, "that can be best addressed by a spiritual woman who has been there and understands the ropes better." Her sensitivity to women's pressing issues was clear in her prophecies. She directed the prophecies to a pregnant woman who needed badly to reunite with her husband in America. She also directed prophecies towards a mother who needed a visa so that she could visit a daughter that she had not heard from, for a long time. Beverly also prophesied to a woman who wanted to travel to the U.K. for further studies. Beverly promised all of these women "travel breakthroughs."

3.2.1.1b "Tailored" Prayers for Migration: "Prophetic Declarations for Travel"

In the neo-Pentecostal tradition in Ghana, a "prophetic declaration" is a form of prayer where people speak words of prophecies into their own lives. In a typical prayer at any neo-Pentecostal church, a worshiper implores God or the Holy Spirit or Jesus (through the words he or she speaks) to bring about a change in a situation and relies on this object's benevolence for the results. In a "prophetic declaration," the worshipper depends not only on the Holy Spirit but also on the power of the words he or she speaks to bring about what is desired.

The worshipper sees himself or herself as an active agent in the manifestation of the expressed desires and not a passive recipient of blessings. As one pastor explained to me, "When you make a declaration before God, you say what you want and believe that it is only

²³⁴ Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features". 6.

²³⁵ Telephone communication with Laud Moffat on the 19/12/2014.

https://youtu.be/weYHI_ufUQ?t=1h58m15s (Accessed 17/01/2015).

a matter of time until what you have spoken in the spirit realm manifests itself in the natural.”²³⁶ When worshippers are making the declarations they first identify a problem they are experiencing, describe the sought after solution, and find the proper scriptural context in which their situation can be located. For example, a person dealing with a sickness would, in a declaration, state that he is healed of the sickness according to the teachings of a scripture, “Father in the name of Jesus, I decree and declare that I am now healed according to your word. I confess according to Isaiah 53:5 that by your stripes I am healed.” The declaration cures the malady. These are performative utterances—by saying words, one is bringing about what is said. Worshippers of neo-Pentecostal traditions often make their own declarations. Nevertheless, prophets can make declarations on behalf of the worshippers, asking them to receive the declarations. Sometimes, the prophet simply leads the congregation in making declarations. He or she reads a written form of the declarations aloud and the congregation repeats the words after him or her.

Because Pentecostals view prosperity and a fulfilled life as integral to salvation, members are encouraged to make declarations for good health, prosperity, and success in all endeavours including migration.²³⁷ International travelling has become an important focus of declarations.²³⁸ As I have argued in earlier discussions, the understanding in Ghana is that international travelling exposes the travellers to opportunities that enable them to achieve upward mobility in the Ghanaian society. The traveller has access to the richer countries of the world; acquires Western lifestyles and mannerisms that are highly valued in Ghana; and access international education.²³⁹

In the PCK tradition, "prophetic declarations" are not mere utterances. They are to produce results or an action. They can be best described as “performative utterances.” These instruments or utterances can miraculously bring about what is said.²⁴⁰ As a member explained, “The belief is that when the prophets make the prophetic proclamations, they [worshippers] repeat after the prophets because the words convey worshippers’ desires very

²³⁶ Personal communication with Laud Moffat on 13/03/ 2014.

²³⁷ Cephas N. Omenyo and Wonderful Adjei Arthur, "The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa," *Studies in World Christianity* 19, no. 1 (2013): 60.

²³⁸ van Dijk.

²³⁹ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 86.

²⁴⁰ Austin. Ray.

forcefully, they trigger the Holy Spirit to act on their behalf at the embassies.”²⁴¹ In Ghanaian neo-Pentecostal Christianity and the indigenous religions, “spoken words are widely believed to have spiritual potency and therefore have performative effect.”²⁴² The belief is that what you speak of life is what you get.²⁴³ To prayerfully declare or prophesy for one’s own freedom from an affliction from during ritual services means making positive verbal proclamations about your destiny.²⁴⁴

The “prophetic declaration” ritual process is characterized by the use of very aggressive and warlike gestures. Participants stamp their feet and walk about briskly while throwing their hands in the air as if they are in a fight. “The declarations are spiritual warfare.”²⁴⁵ The gestures are the symbolic ways through which participants act out their spiritual struggles with forces of evil. The gestures also express the participants’ urgent need for victory.

In the discussion that follows, I will focus on selected “prophetic declarations” during the “Token of passport” rituals to illustrate two dimensions of these rituals. During the “Token of passport” rituals, there were “prophetic declarations” in connection with travel and international business connections.²⁴⁶ As a starting point, the prophets asked the congregation to raise their passports with one hand so that the passports could receive the declarations. Because they represented their owners, the anointing of the passports would transfer to them. In the neo-Prophetic churches, physical objects including passports can be anointed through utterances, or the use of olive oil to protect them from influences of evil forces.²⁴⁷

Prophet Hubert began the “prophetic declaration” rituals by making his declarations to prepare the minds of the worshippers for the declarations:

²⁴¹ Telephone communication with Mr Sampong a mechanical engineer at the PCK on the 08/09/2014.

²⁴² Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘Unction to Function’: Reinventing the Oil of Influence in African Pentecostalism,” 244.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Telephone communication with Moffat on 16/03/2015.

²⁴⁶ The “Token of passport” leaflet was taken from the brochure for the “Signs and Tokens Conference.”

²⁴⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘Unction to Function’: Reinventing the Oil of Influence in African Pentecostalism,” 254. Anointing in the PCK and other neo-Prophetic churches is a mediated phenomenon where olive oil, utterances, or gestures are used to effect or activate the presence of the Holy Spirit to change conditions of an individual, group, object(s), or a place(s). For detailed explanation see: Quayesi-Amakye, “Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana.”

It is not for you to just go and stay there, it is for you to go and do business, make loads of money and come back home and be a blessing here! I have my British passport here... (He reached for his British passport in his pocket, showed it to the crowd, and continued). Like me, some of you will be citizens of another nation. Yet, you will be staying here... You will be citizens of other countries... I see British citizens here...! I see Italian, German, Canadian, and Australian citizens here.... You will be in Kumasi and be a holder of a British passport... Pray, Pray, Pray... I can see you going somewhere... (A thunderous applause accompanied by shouts of "Amen, we receive it!" greeted these declarations).²⁴⁸

Hubert's declarations presented here represent the first level of the "prophetic declaration" rituals. I refer to this level as the "invoking of the powers of travel" level. By invoking the powers of travel, the PCK demonstrates that travel or migration has a spiritual side and this spirit of migration or travel must be invoked if the activity must be successful. At this level, the ritual also indicates the capacity of the declarations to generate congenial moods for participants. In the PCK, for a ritual to be efficacious, an appropriate mood must be generated among participants. The participants must be in a travel or migration imagination or mood if their plans must unfold smoothly. When Hubert asked the crowd to "pray, pray, pray, I can see you going somewhere, I see you in Canada...," he was simply inducing the appropriate mood or that ritual ambiance.

Prophet Hyeaman's "prophetic declaration" that focused on attacking and destroying every roadblock to migration, represents another level of the "prophetic declarations" in the "Token of passport" ritual process. Hyeaman was the last prophet to minister. He walked to the pulpit to lead the Church in this ritual performance. Reading from the brochure for the conference, he said, "You see, when demons follow you, and they cancel any hope of where you are going. No matter how nice you are, demons are not nice." He paused, looked at the congregation, and continued to lead the congregation in the following declarations:

I remove every demonic injunction, every demonic embargo. Every embargo that the devil has put over your life, I cancel that embargo tonight! Tell the person next to you, say, neighbour, if the devil did not want you to travel, that was then your travel problems are past tense... Now pick your brochure... (Each person picked a copy of the brochure)... Say the declarations in the brochure with meaning because what you believe will happen to you! Say, in the name of Jesus! I decree that my feet are cleansed and drippings from heaven sanctify my hands! I use my travelling documents as a point of contact and I invoke the manifestation of my international connections. Closed doors for opportunities are open! You are saying it again...! Say I use my travelling documents as a point of contact and I invoke the manifestations of my international connections! Closed doors for opportunities are open! In this year, I

²⁴⁸A recorded statement from Prophet Hubert Angel during the Tokens of Passports ritual session.

will have international connections, in the name of Jesus! Any closed doors are opened permanently!²⁴⁹

The most important of the evil powers that derail migration plans are demons. Demons orchestrate visa denials, the inability of migrants to convince immigration officials of their worthiness for entry, the drowning of migrants seeking to cross the Seas to Europe on rafts, and a vista of challenges migrants face in all the stages of the process. This declaration is intended to neutralize the powers of demons so that the migration will proceed without any impediments. By repeating the declarations after the prophet, the congregation is participating in concert with the Holy Spirit in the destruction of the demonic forces. Figure 14 shows the “prophetic declarations” in the leaflet for the “Signs and Tokens,” 2014 brochure. The leaflet also describes the activities that constitute the “Token of passport” rituals.

An important feature I observed in the declarations is that they expressed a sense of being emboldened to embark on their migration plans. In this case, the declarations are verbal acts that ritually create and effect the transformation of the individual into a new life on the international stage. This life is not limited. It is not bound by restrictions of the receiving Western nations, or the failed economic policies in the homeland, or the “whims of institutional visa brokers.”²⁵⁰ It is also worth mentioning that the prophetic utterances provide the congregation with a sense of their involvement in the transformations that would soon take place in their lives, a transformation that would lead to the process of not being an “ordinary person, but who they really want to be.”²⁵¹ As a result, “prophetic declarations” for international migrations have come to occupy an important place at the PCK. Figures 14 and 15 show a section of the Church members during the “prophetic declarations.”

²⁴⁹ “Prophetic declarations” led by Prophet Gilbert Hyeaman on 29/08/2014 at the PCK. The same declaration is on the leaflet shown in figure 14.

²⁵⁰ Daswani, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility,” 67-82.

²⁵¹ Ibid.



Figure 14. "Prophetic declarations" for the destruction of "demonic roadblocks" at the PCK

3.3.1.2 Non-Verbal Ritual Actions for Migration: "Raise your Passports"

Non-verbal gestures or actions are essential to the "prophetic declarations." These include actions such as raising up of the hands while holding a travel document, removing of shoes, stepping in water, and raising the flags of desired destinations in the West. I refer to these gestures and actions as the "non-verbal travel rituals." What defines this ritual form is the focus on the use of gestures and actions rather than verbal expressions to spiritually transform the individual and or the travel documents to attract and acquire supernatural enablement for travel. Nevertheless, these gestures were essential part of the verbal actions such as the "prophetic declarations." After the general declarations, during the 2014 "Token of passport" session, Prophet Hubert asked the congregation to raise their travel documents while he prayed over them:

Raise your passports, Father in the name of Jesus, even if nobody here believes what am saying, I decree and declare that let those passports be impregnated with faith to obey the words of God through a prophet... I send word to every immigration department, every consulate service, that when they see each passport here, they will look at it with eyes of mercy! Begin to pray; begin to pray that your passport listens.²⁵²

Taking passports to a ritual setting (the church) for ritual purposes transform them from ordinary travel and national identity documents into ritual symbols. The gesture of raising passports in the context of the travel ritual is symbolic of infusing the passports with

²⁵² Prophetic declarations by Prophet Hubert Angel at the PCK on 27/07/2014.

supernatural power. Because the Holy Spirit fills the air during the rituals, when the passports are lifted up they become ritually charged with the Spirit. In this state, they are empowered to engage spiritually orchestrated obstacles, eliminate them, and “open doors” spiritually for international travels, international connections, and international businesses. In essence, the passports “participate in the powers and virtues they represent” in the ritual process.²⁵³

The passports are used as “powers or symbols metonymically and metaphorically.”²⁵⁴ The context distinguishes them. The passport in this ritual context assumes a new role as the symbolic object that ushers the holder into his or her travel destinies. These passports are somewhat personified and given a “living being” status. They are spoken to as if having the ability to listen. Figure 15 shows the raising of passports during the rituals.



Figure 15. Raising passports and other travel documents during “travel rituals” at the PCK

The church performed a different form of non-verbal action on the eighth day, a day after the “Token of passport” rituals—Thanksgiving Day in 2014. The congregation who included migrants already residing in Western countries and prospective migrants was asked to bring to church, the mini-flags of their resident countries as well as nations they desired to travel to. Kusi-Boateng asked participants to raise the flags as a sign of victory over every

²⁵³ Turner, 1102.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. Jerry D. Moore, ed. *Visions of Culture : An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2009), 307.

roadblock to international travels. This symbolic action is what I refer to as the “the flag raising act” travel ritual. Migrants residing in countries such as the U.K., Canada, and U.S.A., who visited Ghana for the conference and prospective migrants who want to migrate overseas came with the countries’ mini flags. I came away with the impression that when participants who were already living abroad, hold these flags, they inspire and boost the confidence of those who desire to migrate to the West. Supporting my observation, a participant explained, “If people overseas could travel all the way to Kumasi to participate in these rituals, then the rituals must indeed be powerful and these people must really need them.” Some individuals came with two flags, one of their countries of origin (mainly Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, and Zimbabwe) and the other of the nation of residence as migrants, or the dream country. The prophets asked all of them to raise their flags up to receive some “prophecies for travel breakthroughs” into the nations whose mini-flags were raised.

It is important to note that the flags represented the presence of an international audience. This shows how the PCK’s rituals receive recognition beyond Ghana and attract aspiring migrants from neighbouring African countries, becoming international. The participation of migrants already living in the West in these rituals also shows that even after travelling overseas, the challenges that people face, drives them home to seek spiritual interventions and the PCK has been identified by many as “the place to go.” Although some of the international audience viewed their participation in the PCK travel rituals, as part of their obligations as members, most of the worshippers explained that they participate in these rituals because of frustrations they or family or friends have concerning their migration plans.

Other people said they wanted to learn from prophecies what God had to say about the countries they now reside in. Some people said they came to participate in the rituals so that they could eliminate possible impediments in their ways during future travels, or in the course of their daily lives as migrants. Unfavourable migration policies of Western nations emerged as another factor that pushed my respondents to seek for spiritual help at the PCK.

The respondents from other parts of Africa such as Zimbabwe also expressed their chagrin towards very strict and unfavourable Western immigration policies in Africa in general as the reason for attending the travel ritual practices at the PCK. They said that after trying all avenues including legal and political, they found the PCK’s rituals to be the final

resort. In addition, during the rituals, they find others in similar situations to share their frustrations with and receive special spiritual support for their travel ambitions.

Other respondents shared the frustrations that bring them to the PCK. Embassies might only accept applications from persons with diplomatic passports or visits limited to business purposes. The larger the share refused, the fewer persons deemed to fall within the scope of what constitutes a legitimate traveller to these countries.²⁵⁵ These immigration policies, some of the members explained, are “barriers.” The understanding among my respondents is that advanced industrial countries continue to have strict policies to govern the movement of persons especially from Africa across borders.²⁵⁶ This is not to say that without the barriers (unfavourable immigration policies), the interconnection between religion and migration would cease. It is worth noting the respondents emphasized that even without these institutional barriers, there are supernatural barriers. The spiritual obstacles, my interlocutors emphasized posed much greater threats to their travel ambitions, hence their unending dependence on the ritual practices at PCK. These respondents believed that “the God of Kusi-Boateng who helped us (them) attain their travel visas would give help us (them) avoid deportation and attain success, resident permits, and citizenships overseas.”²⁵⁷ Figures 16 and 17 show the different mini-flags that were raised on the last day of the 2014 “Signs and Tokens” conference.



Figure 16. Representation of the mini-flags at the PCK

²⁵⁵ Hobolth, 429.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Telephone communication with Mrs Jenkins on the 28 July 2014.



Figure 17. The raising of the mini-flags during the 2014 “Signs and Tokens” Conference at the PCK

3.3.2 Incidental (Public) Travel Rituals: “31st Night and Seven Pots”

At the end of the year and the beginning of the next, the PCK performs 31st December crossover worship service. Each year’s has a theme. For example, the theme for ending the year 2011 and welcoming 2012 was, “2012: Our year of Divine acceleration.” The theme for 2014 was the “year of Prophetic Destiny” and 2015 was marked on the 31st night of 2014, as the “year of His Power.” The Crossover rituals that the PCK performs, offer a different ritual approach to international migration. This approach is rather incidental. According to Kusi-Boateng, in marking a passage from one period to another, thus, end of the year and the beginning of another year, creates a special interval between the years.²⁵⁸ He adds that the interval is auspicious, incidental, and liminal.²⁵⁹ The period provides opportunities for rituals.

The ritual performed during this phase is for restructuring, refortification, reordering disordered situations before the New Year sets in.²⁶⁰ Although not exclusive to the PCK, since 2010, the Church has prioritized travel rituals among the repertory of rituals marking the end of every year and the beginning of another, in all its affiliate branches. However, the Church performs the travel rituals at this time, only when spiritually necessary. What is significant about this travel ritual is its incidental nature and timing. The period between the 9 O’clock

²⁵⁸ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng.

²⁵⁹ Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions : Symbol, Ritual, and Community*, Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion Series (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 97-98.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

pm on 31st December and 1:00 am on the 1st of January in a new year is most suitable for the performance of very important rituals. If a ritual is performed at this time, it would be efficacious.²⁶¹ The location of these travel rituals as the purview of the apex of the hierarchy, speaks largely to the high premium it attaches.

Prophet Kusi-Boateng presided over the 31st-All-night services. Nevertheless, his spiritual sons also performed travel rituals during the 31st Dec. crossover nights in affiliate branches. Figure 18, shows a poster of the 2013 crossover service.

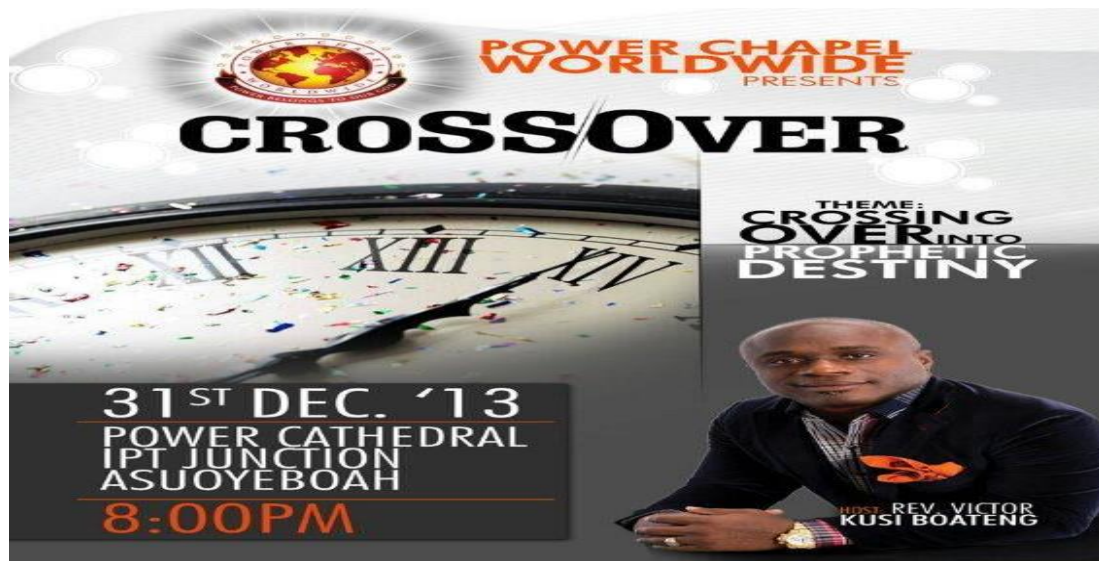


Figure 18. The theme for 31st crossover services (pictures taken from PCK's Facebook page)

I discuss one of the rituals in one of Kusi-Boateng's affiliate branches in the eastern region of Ghana, one that focused international migration in 2013, what I refer to as the "Seven Pots travel ritual." I refer to the rituals as the "seven pots," because of the use of seven pots in this ritual context. The ritual was presided over by Prophet Vaglas Issah.²⁶² I had the opportunity to be a part. The ritual service began by 9:00pm on the night of 31/12/2013, with prayers, singing of praise hymns, dancing, and hand clapping. Two young men placed seven traditional earthenware pots on a platform in front of the crowd of worshippers gathered in a rented classroom for the service.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² I met Prophet Vaglas Issah at the Power Cathedral in Kumasi and he invited me over to a PCK fellowship in Koforidua for their "31 Crossover" travel rituals. Prophet Vaglas indicated that he is one of Prophet Kusi-Boateng's 700 "spiritual" children. The sons are religious leaders and lay people Kusi-Boateng mentors.



Figure 19. Prophet Vaglas Issah performing the “seven pots travel ritual” at the PCK fellowship in Koforidua

When the praise and worship session stopped, Prophet Issah mounted the platform on which the pots had been arranged. (Figure 19 shows the traditional pots, prophet Issah in white shirt and a section of the congregation). He asked the congregation to remain standing, as he walked around explaining to them the significance of the ritual they were about to witness. Holding up one of the traditional earthenware pots and showing it to the congregation (shown in figure 19), he asked them to open their Bibles and to read Jeremiah 19:1-14. A member read the scripture in English while another translated it into the Twi (local) language. The Prophet started into an explanation of the scriptural reading, linking it to the ritual:

God showed me that tonight’s ritual is specifically for ‘travel breakthroughs...’ The seven pots you see in front here are representations (*ahyensodee*) of all the forms of evil against your travel breakthroughs. Seven is a divine number of completion or coming to full cycle and spiritual perfection... You can find the spiritual meaning of number seven in Joshua 6:4... The first pot represents the evil of disappointments, failures, denials and all forms of discriminations standing between you and your overseas travel plans... Pot two, stands in all the covenants you may have made with the devil and his agents in your past, which are now haunting your travel plans... Pot three stands for all manner of curses chasing away your travel destiny.²⁶³

²⁶³ Prophet Vaglas Issah performing the “seven Pots” Travel Ritual at the affiliate PCK in Koforidua on 31 December 2013.

The prophet placed the third pot down; taking the fourth pot, he continued the ritual:

The fourth pot signifies the evil agenda of all individuals, evil families members (*efienipa*) hindering your travel plans. The activities of these malevolent people stand as travel barriers (*Akwantuo mu akwansidee*)... The fifth one stands for your own fears preventing you from pursuing your travel dreams... Pot six represents 'closed doors' to overseas travel... Any immigration officer 'closing your travel doors' must be giving a different assignment during your time of visa application... The last pot here represents financial obstacles you face in your travel efforts... Now, in the name of Jesus, we are breaking these seven pots one after the other! Just as we cannot put the pots together again, so shall all obstacles, failures, and curses that befall you will be destroyed forever for us to have our travel freedoms and breakthroughs in the years ahead...! Jeremiah broke one pot representing the breaking of a nation and its people due to the evils in the land. Nevertheless, we are breaking seven pots representing total destruction of the evils that stand against our travel aspirations, as God showed me.²⁶⁴

In this ritual process, the prophet identified seven categories of travel challenges. He represented each category by a pot. The challenges that were hitherto not physically touchable became physically identifiable so that they could deal with them in concrete ways. The use of a pot to represent evil was inspired by Jeremiah's action in the Bible. The ritual was simply a re-enacted form of Jeremiah's ritual.

Using pots in the ritual also reflects the influence of what Gifford coins as the "primal Pentecostal imagination" in the ritual. Gifford uses this phrase to refer to how "the African primal worldview plays fundamental roles in how Pentecostals understand and respond to reality as it unfurls."²⁶⁵ Because witches and sorcerers keep their evil charms in pots in the Ghanaian indigenous religious imagination, black pots symbolize evil in Ghanaian thinking.²⁶⁶ Thus, in using the seven traditional pots to represent categories of evil potentially or actually affecting the travelling plans of the people gathered, Prophet Issah is building on this traditional Ghanaian black pot symbolism.

Linking scriptural symbols to Ghanaian traditional symbolism is a feature typical of neo-prophets in Ghana. In his explanations for the ritual, Issah builds on the links between

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Paul Gifford, "The Primal Pentecostal Imagination: Variants, Origins and Importance," *Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 34, no. 2 (2009); Clifton Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, vol. 6, African Christian Studies Series (Eugene, Oregon: PICKWICK, 2014), 48.

²⁶⁶ Opoku Onyinah, "Contemporary "Witchdemonology" in Africa," *International Review of Mission* 93, no. 370-371 (2004).

the pot and evil in the Jeremiah episode, and the Ghanaian indigenous religious symbolism of the pot as a repository of evil forces. Through his appropriation of this Biblical analogy, he anchors this travel ritual in Christian practice in a typical Ghanaian neo-Pentecostal fashion. What the ritual seems to unearth is how the neo-prophet appeals to biblical precedents such as Jeremiah to show that he is acting in an unbroken link with the prophets of the old testaments. In his words, prophet Issah stated that “Today, I stand as a prophet of God, just like Jeremiah and call you as witnesses,” to demonstrate his unbroken link with the prophets in the Bible. The present day Ghanaian prophets appeal to biblical precedents within the Pentecostal tradition in the book of Acts, showing their unbroken link with the apostolic days.²⁶⁷

This is also a re-enactment of biblical ritual. However, prophet Issah reworks the original. In the text he used, Jeremiah proclaimed shocking utter destruction upon the people for their idolatry as he broke the earthenware vessel (“So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, so that it can never be amended...”). However, the prophet provides interesting twist to the text, instead of the destruction of a people, he re-enacts the ritual for the destruction of travel challenges. This ritual act helps make sense of dissonant imagery as part of such migration rituals.

After explaining the ritual process to the congregation, prophet Issah led them to rigorously pray and express their wishes, standing close to the pots. The prophet then poured a bottle of olive oil (“a symbol of God’s power and presence”) into each pot while addressing the worshippers, “with this oil that stands for the ‘anointing that breaks the yoke and the symbol of God’s presence,’ we are breaking the ‘evil yokes’... that hang on our travel breakthroughs, in Jesus’ name!”²⁶⁸ Prophet Issah smashed one pot after the other on the cemented floors outside the meeting place. He destroyed the pots that failed to break completely with a machete.

The ritual for the last pot was quite different. After prayer, declarations and the pouring of the anointing oil into the pot, prophet Issah asked worshippers to place cedi bills (of any denomination) into the pot. This was a way of “buying off,” or ridding oneself of the financial obstacles derailing travel ambitions. After placing his money in the pot (as the last

²⁶⁷ Omenyo and Arthur, 64.

²⁶⁸ Prophetic declarations by Prophet Issah on 31/12/ 2013 at the PCK affiliate branch in Koforidua, Ghana.

person), the prophet said, “With our monies, we are breaking through every financial obstacle, international business and travel visa application fee obstacle against us... All these areas, you need money to access, right? (He asked the congregation)... With our monies as ‘seed offerings,’ when this pot is broken, we are breaking through in all those areas!”²⁶⁹

By using pots to represent forms of supernatural evil or obstacles to migration, Prophet Issah makes them concrete – things that worshippers can see and touch. Seeing the pots break has the effect of forcefully bringing home to worshippers the truth that those potential and actual roadblocks to their travel projects have been indeed eliminated. Here, the ritual language and actions are not representations of worshippers’ desire, but are channels for effecting the travel aspirations and destroying the roadblocks. Again, the underlying principle at work in the ritual is imitative magic. When pots representing evil are broken in a ritual context, participants will experience problem free lives. This ritual generates a sense that worshippers’ travel plans can go on unimpeded by evil forces. The “seven pots” travel ritual also demonstrates the action orientedness of the PCK’s religious tradition. Kusi-Boateng and his “spiritual sons” make a point of showing to worshippers that they are doing something concrete to solve their travel problems. When worshippers make claims that PCK Church is “the place to go” when one needs help with migration challenges, it is because they are witnesses to its active engagement of the supernatural in their migration projects in the context of rituals.

3.3.3 The “Private Travel Rituals”

A category of the PCK’s travel rituals involves one-on-one interactions between Individuals and ritual specialists. I refer to these rituals as “private travel rituals.” Travel or migration-related challenges are not the only problems attracting this kind of ritual attention. People with different problems—health, poverty, unemployment, and marital issues also meet Prophets privately for the performance of such rituals. However, travel or migration-related challenges have come to occupy the top of the hierarchy of problems needing such ritual attention. Unlike the “Token of a passport” that is unique to the PCK, “private rituals” are prevalent among other Pentecostals.

What is unique about the PCK’s private travel or migration ritual practices is how specific days of the week are purposely set aside for them. Prophet Kusi-Boateng or any of his

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

“spiritual” sons performs the PCK's one-on-one ritual practices in the context of personal consultations. Three categories of people come for these rituals. Kusi-Boateng describes the first category, “They are those who will come to see me and say, Papa, I want to travel abroad for school or business and want you to help me with special prayers for admission, favour, financial breakthroughs, and grace to excel.”²⁷⁰ Prominent among people in this are student members who have gained admissions or have been awarded scholarships to study in universities abroad but have no money to pay for visa fees and other travel expenses because their families are poor.

Others also come because of special rituals for success, protection, and safety for the journey. Kusi-Boateng explained that when such people consult him, he does one of the following three things. One, he counsels those who he discerns do not have to travel yet, advising them to wait until the right time. Two, he would perform private rituals for those who indeed need divine intervention. Nevertheless, for those whose challenges are simply material, Kusi-Boateng offers them material support. These are in the form of payment of the visa fees, airline tickets, and other material needs for the journey.

What is important here is that the Church does not only attend to the spiritual or ritual needs of prospective migrants, but the material, moral, and financial aspects too. Kusi-Boateng described how some people come for such consultations on a routine basis to pray for travel blessings or mercies. Many of them had sought spiritual help in connection with visa problems and had been successful in the process, but still required divine intervention or travel mercies, in the other stages of their migrations. For instance, during one of my visits to Kusi-Boateng, I met Akorli, a banker who said he had already secured a visa to travel to Austria but had come to see Kusi-Boateng for the guidance of the Holy Spirit before going. That day, I also met Constance, a Ph.D. student from the University of Toronto doing fieldwork in Ghana. She had turned in her application for permanent residence in Canada, a few days before travelling to Ghana and had come to PCK to secure Papa's 'travel blessings' and anointing so that “all will be well (with her).”²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Telephone communication with Prophet Kusi-Boateng of the PCK on 21/12/2014.

²⁷¹ Personal communication with Constance on 6/103/2014. “Travel blessings” according to Kusi-Boateng is a prayer for success and protection for the traveller or migrant before, during or after arrival in the destination country.

According to Kusi-Boateng, the second group of people who attend the “private travel rituals” are “those whose migrations or travels God had revealed to my spiritual sons or me. God had marked them to travel overseas for business, education, or mission work or a ‘travelling breakthrough door’ has opened unbeknownst to them.”²⁷² “Sometimes these individuals may not even have passports or the interest in travelling abroad,” he added.²⁷³ Kusi-Boateng explained how “It is easy for such individuals to obtain the travel visa with the required documentations. So far as God has said the person should travel to specific countries for various reasons, nothing and no human being can stand in the way.” Kusi-Boateng concluded by explaining how such “chosen” individuals still needed to “see” him for private counselling and anointing with the processing of the documents and other dealings with embassies and the journey itself.

The third group of people who participate in the private travel rituals is those who are driven either by socioeconomic struggles, personal frustrations or by the conviction that life abroad holds better prospects for them. This is not to say that similar socioeconomic issues do not drive people in the first two groups. However, people in the last category are driven specifically by socioeconomic hardship to leave Ghana. A young man I met consulting with one of Kusi-Boateng’s prophets echoed what many of the youth I met in the Church said about being “fed up with life in Ghana and feeling the pressure to seek their fortunes overseas.”²⁷⁴ This young man explained how he did not know how to begin the process that would eventually “land us (them) there,” because he had no friend or relative living abroad.²⁷⁵ He expressed hope that through Papa, the Holy Spirit would open some travel doors for him.

The individuals in the third category take the initiative to either call the Church office or go to Kusi-Boateng privately for spiritual help. “Some will called purposely to ask for ‘ritual guidance for travelling’ (*akwantuo mu akwankyerε*),” explained Kusi-Boateng. During an interview on a day after worship Kusi-Boateng said, “Just yesterday, out of the 120 people who came to see me for counselling, 29 were in dire need of travel rituals. It is these kinds of

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng on 14/03/ 2014.

²⁷⁴ Personal communication with Mr Oppong on 8/03/ 2014.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

individuals that I perform specific and elaborate (private) travel rituals for.”²⁷⁶ Such consultations begin with Kusi-Boateng asking a series of questions such as, “Have you gone for any visa interview?” (The person may respond “yes” or “no”), “Who is coming to take you, or so far, what preparations have you made for the journey?” Kusi-Boateng described a typical private consultation with individuals pushed by socioeconomic hardship to begin the migration process:

Some people would say, ‘I have gone for the interview three or four times and I have been denied.... This is my last hope or last chance. This happens to be my last interview. Prophet, please help me!’). This is because, before a person would come to see you as a man of God, it means the person has made the first or second attempt to secure a travelling visa and both have failed. At this stage, they seek for spiritual help from a prophet of God who is ‘Hot’ or on fire for God.²⁷⁷

Kusi-Boateng explained how questions about the number of times a person had been denied travelling visas, the type of visas he or she was applying for when they intend to travel, and the embassy of the destination country, are important in helping him determine the nature of the travel ritual to perform. However, he shared that in some cases the ritual formats used for the individuals are revealed to him through dreams and visions.

Prophet Vaglas Issah one of Kusi-Boateng's spiritual sons, also described how he would conduct “spiritual investigation” (*sunsumu nhwehwemu*)—a form of divination to ascertain whether a spiritual force or a curse was behind the travel challenges, especially, difficulties related to travel visa acquisition. If the need to migrate was urgent and his investigations revealed that agents of supernatural harm were behind the challenges, he would detain the passports of such individuals for three days. He described the ritual involving the passports he would detain:

During the three days, I will get anointing oil and other items including three white candles (this ritual formula is not repetitive and may change with each individual case) and enter into the realm of the spirit to fast and pray. I will put the items on the floor with the passport in the middle, surrounding the passport with the three candles. I put the anointing oil beside the passports and then pray facing the direction of the embassy where the visa will be requested. I leave the passports at the place in the room where the ritual was performed, until the third day. Then I give the passports back to the owners with an additional *akwankyerɛ* (spiritual guidance) that should be done for seven days.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Personal communication with Prophet Kusi-Boateng on 14/03/ 2014.

²⁷⁷ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng at the PCK on 12/03/2014.

²⁷⁸ Telephone communication with Prophet Vaglas Issah during the “Signs and Tokens” Conference at the Power Chapel in Kumasi on 23/07/2014.

The three-day ritual of dry fasting, anointing, and seclusion is prevalent among the neo-Prophetic agents in Ghana. The underlying belief is that the fasting, anointing of the passports, and seclusion of the prophet, activate the presence of the Holy Spirit, which then intervenes to alter hitherto unrelenting difficult visa situations. Depending on the specific difficult travel situation, this ritual form could be intensified. The specific embassy the passport will be sent to for a visa, the type of visa being requested, how many times the person had been denied a visa, and his or her sense of urgent need to migrate can call for an intensification of the ritual. The duration could be longer than three days and other ritual objects will be involved.

Some prophets of the PCK described how they would either pray on the passports over the phone or ask worshippers to bring their passports during their next consultation or counselling session for prayers. Mrs. Kanyang, a hospital matron shared with me how she had to buy some ritual items— olive oil and communion wine when she sought for special prayers for her daughter who was going for a visa interview. She added that she had to call Prophet Vaglas Issah on telephone “for a ‘prayer of agreement’ which demanded that I pray at 12:00 am on the third and final day of rituals.”²⁷⁹ Prophet Issah described 12:00 am as an auspicious time in the day and well suited for such rituals: “It is the best time for ‘speaking some things into the atmosphere,’ to break some hindrances, pray for the individual applicants, and make some declarations over passports.”²⁸⁰

According to Vaglas Issah, sometimes he issues directives over the phone requiring individuals to place specific ritual items and the owner’s passport at specified places in their homes for seven days. Often, the places are secluded locations in the house (a place where no one else can see these items). During the seven days, the person must neither touch the passport nor move it from that spot. The belief is that during the seven days, the passport receives “the infusion of divine grace” and “favour on a higher level.” These spiritual processes ensure the success of the visa acquisition.

There are *akwankyerε* (spiritual guidance and direction) for international travels that require that the prospective migrant should stay indoors for a specified duration, while the

²⁷⁹ Telephone interview with Mrs Kayang during the “Signs and Tokens” Conference at the Power Chapel in Kumasi on 23/07/2014.

²⁸⁰ Personal communication with Prophet Issah of the PCK on 31/12/2014.

passport goes through spiritual fortification process. For instance, for a three-day ritual, the person would be required to stay indoors for all the three days. The individual must remain in a prayerful mood and not distracted by other activities during these days; the ritual requires focus.²⁸¹ When the ritual is over, the prophet issues new directives regarding how and when the clientele can submit the visa application form for processing. The goal of all these ritual practices is to empower the passport by “filling it with the Holy spirit.” The immigration officials at the various embassies will favourably consider a spiritually charged passport, and the owner will be issued a visa and allowed entry into the desired overseas nation.”²⁸²

Important in explaining the local and global attraction of the PCKs travel rituals is the charisma of the leader. The basis of Kusi-Boateng charisma is the belief in his wonder working supernatural power and his ability to use this power to help will-be migrants and migrants through the rituals of his church. As Quayesi-Amakye has noted, the 'neo-prophets' are building a reputation for themselves as ritual agents who have powerful spiritual connections to elicit relevant information for existential needs such as international travelling in Ghana.²⁸³ Girish Daswani has also demonstrated how some local prophets have acquired global fame as the 'visa prophets' even though they stay at home, by facilitating the travel projects of their clienteles.²⁸⁴ Kusi-Boateng's charisma is not only local; it is global. According to the personal assistant to Kusi-Boateng, the PCK has acquired a reputation for being "the place to go," for people who need spiritual help in their endeavours to migrate because of the reputation of the prophet Kusi-Boateng.²⁸⁵

Testimonies about the efficacy of the Church's migration focused rituals speak to the leader's charisma. Moffat shared, “There is an anointing on Papa's life that we have come to appreciate, that is, if he tells you to go for travel visa interview, you just have to go and you will get it and we receive many testimonies of people almost every week.”²⁸⁶ Olivia, who intended to travel to Dubai and the U.S.A., for businesses at the time I met her at the church,

²⁸¹ Telephone communication with Prophet Vaglas during the “seven pots” travel rituals at the Power Chapel fellowship in Koforidua on 23/07/2014.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features," Webjournals.

²⁸⁴ Daswani, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility."

²⁸⁵ Personal interview with Laud Moffat, the personal Assistant and a youth pastor at the PCK, on the 06/03/2014.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

added, “Papa can identify with us, and we can believe his prophetic directions, because he has been in our situation before.”²⁸⁷ Testimony after testimony also described how instrumental VKB is in placing individuals where they wanted to be in different parts of the world. Maxwell, a lower division soccer player, narrated how he went to see ‘Papa’(Kusi-Boateng) to enable him (Maxwell) to get a contract to play for any football club overseas. Excited, he explained, “Papa just told me to take GH¢50 and say all that I needed with reference to the desired contract and visa acquisition unto the money and give it out as a gift to anyone... A month after I had done what Papa instructed, I was playing for my team here, when a football Scout, who had apparently been observing me for quite some time, approached my manager to sign me up for a two years contract with a football club in the U.K. I will be going in June next year!”²⁸⁸ Linda, a graphic designer and an entrepreneur added: “If Papa tells you to apply for a travel visa or international business or contract, you just have to... I know this for sure, because through his counsel, prophecy and prayer, I travel in and out of the country to do my businesses both here and abroad. He will not say a thing until he has dealt with it spiritually. Many have and are enjoying their travel breakthroughs due to the rituals here.”²⁸⁹ Uncle Ebo, a 49-year-old car dealer who imports vehicles for sale in Kumasi and Accra shared that his experiences with Kusi-Boateng at the PCK, was the motivation for encouraging his friends and family to participate in its travel ritual practices whenever they wanted to travel abroad. Auntie Adiza, a second-hand clothing distributor, added:

Here in Ghana, the number of people you retain in each religious service depends on your reputation and power in your area of specialization. Every year, during the ‘Signs and Tokens’ conferences, prospective migrants and migrants come from all over Ghana, Africa and the world at large. Some of these people are mainly business executives, graduates, unemployed, and self-employed. They come because they have heard about God's anointing on Kusi-Boateng particularly for international travels, connections, and business. This is the proof of his reputation as the prophet who is gifted with the grace to decree and declare international travels, businesses, and connections for God's people!²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Telephone communication with Olivia on 13 November 2015.

²⁸⁸ Telephone interview with Maxwell at the PCK fellowship on the 20/07/2014.

²⁸⁹ Personal Communication with Linda at the PCK, on the 07/03/2014.

²⁹⁰ Interview with Auntie Adiza at the PCK in Kumasi on 23/03/2014.

Almost every interviewee shared the successes in their travel preparations, or those of a friend or family to the 'travel anointing' on Kusi-Boateng. Some also expressed their sense of confidence in the anointing and reputation Kusi-Boateng has garnered since the inception of the PCK, even though they had not received their travel breakthroughs yet. They shared that it was only a matter of time for them also to overcome their travel challenges. "We cannot wait for that once in a lifetime opportunity to also go abroad," they would say, adding, often after an afterthought that, 'Papa's hands' will definitely touch them soon. The stories of the respondents are indications that Kusi-Boateng has become a household name among people in Ghana seeking forms of spiritual help with their migration projects.

Important in explaining the local and global attraction of the PCKs travel rituals is the charisma of the leader. The basis of Kusi-Boateng's charisma is the belief in his wonder-working supernatural power and his ability to use this power to help will-be migrants and migrants through the rituals of his church. As Quayesi-Amakye has noted, the 'neo-prophets' are building a reputation for themselves as ritual agents who have powerful spiritual connections to elicit relevant information for existential needs such as international travelling in Ghana.²⁹¹ Girish Daswani has also demonstrated how some local prophets have acquired global fame as the 'visa prophets' even though they stay at home, by facilitating the travel projects of their clienteles.²⁹² Kusi-Boateng's charisma is not only local; it is global. According to the personal assistant to Kusi-Boateng, the PCK has acquired a reputation for being "the place to go," for people who need spiritual help in their endeavours to migrate because of the reputation of the prophet Kusi-Boateng.²⁹³

3.4 Conclusion

From the discussion above, I have shown that the PCK has isolated travel and migration as an important area in its ritual culture. The church has created rituals specifically to motivate and facilitate migration and travelling projects. I demonstrated this phenomenon by discussing the ritual life at the PCK; the Church's own neo-Prophetic background; and the members' concerns. I also illustrated my argument in the various sections of the Chapter that PCK is indeed occupying a particular significant space in Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity by

²⁹¹ Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features".

²⁹² Daswani, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility".

²⁹³ Personal interview with Laud Moffat, the personal Assistant and a youth pastor at the PCK, on the 06/03/2014.

furnishing for worshippers and participants, rituals for eradicating roadblocks to the realization of dreams to migrate to the West. I have also shown how difficulties linked with acquiring visas, finding people living in the West to sponsor one's migration or obtaining money for the journey push worshippers to seek for and participate in these rituals.

The ritual life at the PCK indicates a diverse range of ritual activities specifically for enabling the travel agendas. In the context of the rituals, they provide a space for people with various issues on international travel from various places in Africa and overseas to share a communal space, a space to seek redress to their situations. In essence, the rituals provide a space for different classes of people who merge as one because of their travel agenda. The ritual formats and forms for travel are not all new, but borrow from the existing ritual culture of the church; and Ghanaian Pentecostalism in general, such as prophecy, prophetic declarations, and use of symbolic actions and symbols.

Nevertheless, the rituals formats are configured to address the needs associated with international migration. The travel rituals discussed had the tendency to be repetitive, but it was a deliberate attempt of the Church to achieve the designated ends. Important to the discussion was Kusi-Boateng's reputation as "the ritual specialist for international travels and his Church as the place to go for travel rituals." This is a clear indication of the importance of reputation and charisma of the leader in such ritual practices. Gender was an important issue that came up in the travel ritual process. The Church identified the role of the female ritual specialist (Beverly) as a necessary mechanism for addressing gender sensitive issues connected to migration.

Finally, the Chapter engaged Austin to demonstrate that the rituals entail verbal acts that are essential component of the ritual language and processes. While the Chapter focussed on the ritual culture of the PCK to demonstrate the ritual dimension of the MR among the Pentecostals in Ghana, I will in the next Chapter, discuss the narrative dimension of the religiosity at the CoP in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

“THEOLOGIZING FROM BELOW”: THE COP AND GRASSROOTS NARRATIVE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN GHANA

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter examines an emerging Pentecostal grassroots narrative of international travel, which the laity of the Church of Pentecost (CoP) constructs as bits and pieces of individual narratives, to make meanings of their struggles, experiences, and hopes in their travel aspirations. The individual narratives or stories also inspire and bolster plans, and aspirations for such migrations. In the individual pieces of stories the laity create, they combine aspects of scripture, testimonies, and themes from activities of the Church. The bits and pieces of narratives from the laity make up the grassroots narrative of international migration, or what I refer to as 'theologizing or theology from below.'²⁹⁴ It is 'theology' because the stories are emerging as a belief system through which aspiring migrants understand their plans and the framework that shapes their travel projects." Thus, the grassroots narrative of international migration is a combination of composite narratives from the individual stories of informants. I compiled the individual oral stories as composite narratives in order interpret and give a structural understanding of the stories.

As the other Pentecostal Church in Ghana involved in this thesis, the worship tradition of the CoP illustrates a different aspect of MR as it plays out in Ghanaian Pentecostalism. Unlike the PCK, the leadership of the CoP has no specially designed practices to facilitate overseas migrations for worshippers.²⁹⁵ The Church emphasizes the need to expand its mission outside of Ghana and has a highly overseas-oriented outreach programme.²⁹⁶ Nevertheless, in the context of their everyday experiences, the laity who have international migration ambitions create beliefs and meanings of international travel in the form of individual pieces of stories, to make meaning, bolster, inspire, inform, and justify their travel aspirations. The laity also uses the narratives as signposts in the various stages of their

²⁹⁴ I define theology here as systematic developed religious beliefs and practices.

²⁹⁵ Personal communication with the chairperson of the CoP, Apostle Dr. Opoku Onyinah at the headquarters of the Church at Labadi-Accra on 22/01/2014. Apostle Onyinah emphasized that the Church sends missionaries overseas for mission purposes. He added that individuals with travel concerns make use of the Church's facilities and activities to bolster their travel agendas.

²⁹⁶ Onyinah, "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," 235-39. Because of this programme, the Church has what it refers to as "International Missions Office" and prides itself of its establishment and missionary activities in over 90 nations outside Ghana.

preparations, while others try to make sense of the trajectories of their migration plans in terms of these meanings.

I argue that as far as worshippers of the CoP are concerned there is a kind of grassroots (oral) narrative of international migration emerging, which is the meaning-making mechanism through which worshippers understand and interpret the realities of international migration. The narrative also inspires, consoles, and keeps hope alive, during times of despair. Aspiring migrants use it to justify their actions about their travel plans. Invariably, the narrative is not simply constructed meanings of intercontinental travel realities; it contributes to producing and shaping the realities of travel plans.

The discussion in the Chapter will proceed as follows: To provide a backdrop to the discussion, I offer a brief account of the history the CoP in Ghana. I emphasize how the Church encourages contextualization and local appropriation of its activities and messages to meet members' everyday concerns from its beginnings in Ghana. The next section is an ethnographic account of how individual worshippers construct the narrative of international migration and the bits and pieces of scripture and Church practices from which the worshippers with travel concerns construct the individual stories. In the section, I have three themes to demonstrate the dimensions of the grassroots narrative of international migration. I also show in this section how the narrative produces, informs, and shapes the realities of international travel plans for worshippers and Ghana's MR. The discussion in the Chapter is based on my observations in the branch of the CoP in Darkuman and one of the Church's prayer centres in Accra.²⁹⁷

The discussion includes the responses of 20 interviewees from these worshipping centres. The name of the CoP's branch at Darkuman is the "Darkuman District-Central Chapel." The CoP in Darkuman has both local (mostly Akan) and English services ("Assemblies"). The aim is to serve both members (those who can speak English and those who cannot or prefer to worship in the native languages. The Darkuman Central Assembly uses English and translates into the Akan language, while the Prayer centers mostly use the local (Akan) language in their *modus operandi*.

²⁹⁷ At the time of my data collection (2013-2014), the PPC was still under the leadership of the CoP's Odorkor district. However, from the 2015 Communiqué of the Church, the leadership of the CoP ceded connections with the Elder-in-charge (Prophet Daniel Owusu) in January 2015.

The name of the prayer centre that I visited in Accra is the "Paradise Prayer Centre (PPC)." The PPC has been under the *Odorkor* district of the CoP in Accra, Ghana since the year 2000. During typical morning devotion or all-night prayer vigils church members and other people who have come to "wait on the Lord," (pray and fast), fill the centre. When the centre organizes its 14, 21, or 30 days fasting and prayer services, the camp remains filled with many people from all lifestyles and from the length and breadth of the nation. In addition, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, many people, especially members of the CoP visit the PPC for special consultations with the Prophet Daniel. According to Onyinah, the practice is typical at most of the prayer centres.

4.1 The Church of Pentecost in Ghana

The CoP is one of the oldest (classical) Pentecostal churches that emerged in 1937 through the missionary efforts of a British-based Apostolic Church.²⁹⁸ The Church traces its history to the works of both James McKeown and Peter Anim. After his healing from a chronic stomach ulcer and guinea worm infestation in 1921, Anim started a healing ministry at Asamankese in the Central region of Ghana.²⁹⁹ In his efforts to affiliate his healing ministry with Western Pentecostal ministries, Anim requested a missionary from the Bradford Apostolic Church in the U.K. to assist in the administration of his emerging Pentecostal church in Gold Coast (Ghana).³⁰⁰ In 1937, Pastor McKeown arrived at Asamankese as the first resident missionary to Anim's healing church.³⁰¹

Barely three months after his arrival, McKeown suffered malaria, and the colonial district commissioner sent him to the hospital to receive medication. Because of this incident and the fact that the church had a stance on "no medication for healing," McKeown and Anim had to go their separate ways in 1939.³⁰² Because of the schism, the church split into two. Yet still, each group operated under the name, "Apostolic." McKeown's group allowed the use of medication for healing, while Anim's group maintained the concept of "no

²⁹⁸Quayesi-Amakye, "Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," 61-62.

²⁹⁹Ibid. Anim received this healing after embracing the teachings of holiness, prevailing prayer and faith healing through the reading of the "Sword of the Spirit" magazine from the Faith Tabernacle church in Philadelphia.

³⁰⁰Opoku Onyinah, "Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History," *AJPS* 5, no. 1 (2002): 171.

³⁰¹ Quayesi-Amakye, "Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana."

³⁰² Ibid., 63

medication for healing.” In 1962, the President of the Gold Coast (Dr. Kwame Nkrumah) advised McKeown's group to change its name to the “Church of Pentecost (CoP).”³⁰³ This was because between 1939 and 1962, Anim and McKeown's groups engaged in incessant litigations over the use of the name "Apostolic."³⁰⁴ After the personal intervention of Nkrumah, McKeown's group adopted and have maintained the name CoP. Currently, the Church has a worldwide membership of over 2.1million and an international presence in over 90 countries outside Ghana, including Australia.³⁰⁵ Right from the very beginning, McKeown and the Ghanaian leaders who succeeded him in 1982, emphasized the need for the Church to be locally rooted and be indigenous to Ghana in terms of its culture and ministry, to achieve the goal of indigenization (McKeown's philosophy).³⁰⁶ However, the indigeneity to “just evangelize” and let the people know God. He said, “Once the people knew God, everything else would follow.”³⁰⁷ It is not clear what influenced McKeown's philosophy, however, indigeneity of Pentecostal Christianity was already present among other groups of Pentecostals—the AIC's.³⁰⁸

Part of this indigeneity was the “practice of aggressive prayers, setting up prayer centres for supernatural encounter, belief in prophetic visions, faith healing, and deliverance.”³⁰⁹ As part of the indigenization process, “McKeown trained the laity to take up the task of preaching and interpreting scripture in their own culturally relevant ways.”³¹⁰ The Church also emphasized the concept of “priesthood of all believers” and the “prophethood of

³⁰³ Ibid., 68.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., Onyinah, "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," 15; Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 15.

³⁰⁵ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), x. Daswani, "Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London," 442-74.

³⁰⁶ Onyinah, 172.

³⁰⁷ "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," 221. Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967).

³⁰⁸ Kalu, x.

³⁰⁹ Jacob K. Olupona, "Africa, West (Survey)," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van de Mass (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 11-21; C. G. Baëta, "Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of Some 'Spiritual' Churches," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27, no. 1 (1964): 238.

³¹⁰ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 15.

all believers.”³¹¹ The concepts allowed all CoP members to exercise spiritual authority to preach and teach, pray for the sick, confront witchcraft and fetishism individually, unlike the other Pentecostal churches such as the AICs where spiritual power and authority were vested in key persons—the prophet-healer.³¹²

One of the implications of the Church’s dogma is that it allowed members to interpret and contextualize the gospel in culturally relevant ways. More importantly, the Church encouraged interpretation and appropriation of its teachings and practices in the context of everyday experiences. For instance, they would preach, “people who were born-again and went through Holy Spirit baptism were guaranteed protection against forms of supernatural harm.”³¹³ The indigenous contextualization earned the Church the reputation for having requisite supernatural teachings for addressing traditional and modern anxieties and needs.³¹⁴

The CoP’s emphasis on indigenous contextualization and the concept of individual spiritual authority, created a very congenial environment for worshippers to contest, rendition, reproduce, and recreate the Church’s teachings in culturally relevant ways for individual situations and experiences. This orientation plays out in how members involved in international migration build on their own understandings of the Church’s teachings, conference themes, and symbols to create narratives that speak specifically to their individual migration ambitions and concerns. The importance of this historical backdrop is first to make readers familiar with the factors that have shaped the CoP’s evolution from its inception in Ghana to its present state. More importantly, the backdrop enables us to understand the tradition of worshippers reading their own meanings into the CoP’s teachings in addressing their international travel aspirations.

The construction of narratives by the laity is in keeping with the CoP’s historical stance on individual appropriation and contextualization of Pentecostal Christianity. The CoP

³¹¹ Roger Stronstad, "Affirming Diversity: God's People as a Community of Prophets," *Pneuma* 17, no. 1 (1995); *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

³¹² Onyinah, "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," 238.

³¹³ 173.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

shares the teachings and practices of the other classical Pentecostals.³¹⁵ The churches emphasize the need for worshippers to make the Bible and its teachings central to their lives, to believe in the one true God, and to understand their nature as depraved human beings who need to submit to Christ as their saviour.³¹⁶ Followers must acknowledge the invisible presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in their lives and see the directions in which their lives flow as part of “grand divine schemas.”³¹⁷ The Church encourages members to submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.³¹⁸ Other teachings include the notion of spiritual gifts or magico-religious capabilities that certain individuals (ritual experts) have, and the idea that God has bestowed spiritual blessings on the devout worshipper.³¹⁹ The Church also teaches that the activities of demons and witches are destructive and derailing to the blessings of the believer.³²⁰

The narratives on demons and witches reflect a synthesis of Christian demonology and indigenous Ghanaian witchcraft notion that occurred because of the indigenization policies of the Church.³²¹ However, the Church holds that although God protects the faithful believer from the activities of witches, “evil does not always emanate from such. God can also be an alternative cause of evil.”³²² The CoP’s sermons, prayers, songs, and other activities reflect the Church’s narratives.

An important point is that even though the Church is deliverance-oriented especially in its prayer centres (which suggests it also has ritual practices), I use its narratives here for heuristic purposes. In addition, I use this worship tradition to demonstrate the narrative portion of Ghana’s Pentecostal MR because of its high reputation among other Ghanaian

³¹⁵ Onyinah, 123; “Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost,” 216-41; Kingsley Larbi, “African Pentecostalism in the Context of Global Pentecostal Ecumenical Fraternity: Challenges and Opportunities,” *ibid.* 24 (2002).

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ Girish Daswani, “Social Change and Religious Transformation in a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London” (University of London, 2007); “Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London.”; “Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility.”; van Dijk.

³¹⁸ Girish Daswani, “(in)Dividual Pentecostals in Ghana,” *Religion in Africa* 41 (2011): 265-79.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, *Christology and Evil in Ghana : Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology*, ed. Henry Jenson, vol. 49, *Currents of Encounter: Studies on the Contact between Christianity and Other Religions, Beliefs, and Cultures* (New York: Rodopi B.V., 2013), 154.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Opoku Onyinah, “Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5, no. 1 (2002); Quayesi-Amakye, *Christology and Evil in Ghana : Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology*, 49.

Pentecostals as having requisite ethos and dogma that allow laity to appropriate its scriptural teachings and practices to make meaning and for addressing traditional and modern anxieties and needs.³²³

4.2 The CoP and the Grassroots Narrative of international travel

At the CoP, the stories of meaning-making, inspiration, and justification for international migration occur at the level of lay worshippers. In the context of their everyday experiences, the worshippers who aspire to travel draw from experiences and the Church's activities to create pieces of stories. They create these stories by contextualizing, contesting, re-editing or reconfiguring scriptural teachings and other practices of the Church, creating a religiously inspired grassroots narrative.

While religious narratives provide insights into members' shared understandings of the world, they also function as lenses through which worshippers perceive reality and shape themselves to happenings in their day-to-day lives. They are, in a Geertzian sense, models "of" and "for" reality.³²⁴ The individual stories that constitute the grassroots narrative of migration provide insights into how the laity of the Church understand their migration plans, struggles, and experiences and how they perceive their travel aspirations. The following subsections discuss how members construct their individual narratives of travel and the sources of from which they draw from. I have organized the individual stories as composite narratives under three themes in the subsections. The themes form the overarching narrative of international migration. The themes are the "West as some kind of paradisiacal lands," "travel plans as ventures that attract spiritual obstacles," and "rituals and mediums as necessary devices for travel."

4.2.1 "The West as some kind of Paradisiacal Lands for the faithful"

"The West is some kind of heaven, a kind of paradisiacal lands where faithful worshippers must go at a point in their lives. It is a place that God gives to the faithful believer. It is part of the material blessings from God and it is a place where all good and perfect things come..." These short stories of my respondents that I have put together express the understandings of

³²³ Opoku Onyinah, "Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost" (Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2002); Quayesi-Amakye, *Christology and Evil in Ghana : Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology*, 49.

³²⁴ Aram A. Yengoyan, "Clifford Geertz, Cultural Portraits, and Southeast Asia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 4 (2009): 1215-30.

the aspiring migrants' of the Church concerning the West. For them, a travel visa to the West is essentially a ticket to some kind of paradisiacal land—a place of covenant and a place for the faithful. The worshippers rendition the Church's teachings from specific (popular) verses of the Bible to construct such stories to make sense of their pending international migrations.

These worshippers build on renditions of biblical verses, indigenous religious beliefs, and popular understandings to create migration "theology from below." One of these renditions depicts the "West as a kind of heaven, some paradisiacal land, worshippers must strive to go; a place of promise and gift to the faithful."³²⁵ An important example is how my interviewees rendition a popular verse that played out in the prayers, sermons, songs of the Church, James 1: 17. It reads, "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above" has been re-edited as, "all good things come from abroad." Explaining the process of the re-editing and the reason behind it, Mrs Frimpong said, "We interpret some of the popular scriptures used at the Church to support our statement that 'all good things come from abroad.' James 1:17 is an example. It says that 'every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above.' The reference to above actually means abroad... For many of us, we see how every good thing and every perfect thing come from abroad or overseas."³²⁶ Mr Manso added, "Truly, these things are either shipped or flown via aeroplanes to Ghana, that is why practically, in our lifestyle, prayer life, and in our attitude, all we do is to try to go abroad (above) and 'bring down' the good things home(down)."³²⁷ A link between material success and travelling to the West is implied in these oral accounts. We must understand this link in terms of the strong conviction among Ghanaians that living conditions in Western nations are better than those in Ghana.³²⁸ There was also a perception that "Ghanaian migrants in the West have greater access to opportunities and are materially successful."³²⁹ Nevertheless, Mrs Frimpong's and Mr Manso's stories show that the worshippers do not view "abroad" as lands of opportunities and material blessings. There is an attempt to equate abroad or overseas to heaven "above," infusing abroad with divinity. They view places abroad as divine realms or the dwelling place of God and angels; they consider them paradisiacal.

³²⁵ Personal communication with Agnes at the PPC on 12/02/2014.

³²⁶ Personal communication with Mrs Frimpong at the PPC on 12/02/2014.

³²⁷ Personal communication with Mr Manso at the Darkuman Central Assembly of the CoP on 17/01/2014.

³²⁸ Peil; Steve Tonah, *Ghanaians Abroad and Their Ties Home: Cultural and Religious Dimensions of Transnational Migration* (Bielefeld: COMCAD, 2007).

³²⁹ Personal communication with Mr Manso.

Moreover, in popular Ghanaian imagination, countries in the West or the Whiteman's lands are idyllic places. Life is easier there.³³⁰ There is material abundance and contentment.³³¹ These are the places where "good things come from."³³² These are lands "God has chosen to bless."³³³ In indigenous Ghanaian religious cosmologies, which have an enduring influence on understandings of Pentecostal worshippers, material abundance is a sign of divine favour.³³⁴ This implies that God favours countries of the West. Popular understandings of places such as the U.S.A., as "God's country," reinforce such understandings of the West. Travelling to the West then offers the traveller the opportunity to participate in these divine blessings.

Also, in African religious thinking, where "salvation means material abundance in the here and now, and, not something to be achieved after death, having access to these 'above lands' has salvific value."³³⁵ One is "saved" by travelling to the West. They cast the West as promised lands and to go there is a blessing, a sign of divine favour. Clearly, these worshippers are creating a narrative of the West to inspire and justify their aspirations for international migration, by building on popular cultural understandings, indigenous religious understandings of salvation, and re-edited versions of biblical verses used in the Church.

Furthermore, the "narrative of the West as paradise" is reinforced and popularized among members of the Church because of how migrant members present themselves, their situation in the West, and the West itself, when they call or visit the Church to give their testimonies. According to Agnes, when the migrant members come home and attend Church to give testimonies, they show off in the most expensive and classy clothing, vehicles, and other materials. They dress and talk to make statements of their "rich been-to" status. They talk in terms of how their lives changed for the better; how they moved from grass to grace and from misery to glory; and how they were divinely connected to Western individuals who

³³⁰ Rachel Morssink, "Greetings to Ghana: The Communication between Ghanaian Migrants in the Netherlands and Their Relatives in Ghana and Its Contributions to Ghanaian Perceptions of the West" (University of Amsterdam, 2009), 1.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Personal communication with Mrs Frimpong.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Claudia Währisch-Oblau, "Material Salvation: Healing, Deliverance, and "Breakthrough" in African Migrant Churches in Germany," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown and Harvey Cox (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 61-75.

³³⁵ Ibid.

were their Angels.³³⁶ “From such testimonies, you can only imagine these places as out of this world, at least our world.”³³⁷ In Agnes’ story, it would seem that through their testimonies at the Church, these migrants show off their “riches” and create distorted images in the minds of aspiring members of the CoP at home; they hide their real experiences. More so, they show off by giving huge sums money as thanksgiving offering of money from their hard-earned salaries. These images the migrant members portray during the time they share testimonies at CoP at home also form the basis for the creation of the narrative of “the West as some kind of paradise.” According to Mr Manso, “there are stories floating among members that the West are blessed lands filled with milk and honey, the place for the faithful; the place where money grows on trees; the place where God connects the faithful to abundance.”³³⁸ These stories indicate that the show offs of migrant members, their over exaggerated testimonies of their “rich” lives abroad, and the provision of financial and social remittances to the Church and relatives back home underlie the creation of such narrative of the West as heavenly.

To conclude this section, I reiterate that aspiring migrants constructed the “narrative of the West” from popular themes used in preaching, songs, testimonies from migrant members, and prayers, at the Church. The themes were centred on material success and breakthrough. Paul Gifford states that Pentecostal “churches in Africa have one thing in common—a focus on achieving success.”³³⁹ This form of Christianity “emphasizes how it is imperative for the believer to be successful.” The idea is, “success, breakthroughs, or victories are the rights and inheritance of the believer.”³⁴⁰ Failure is a spiritually deprived state.”³⁴¹

³³⁶ Personal communication with Agnes.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Personal communication with Mr Manso.

³³⁹ Paul Gifford, "Expecting Miracles," (Chicago: Christian Century Foundation, 2007). See also Währisch-Oblau; Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, "The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology," in *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* (The Church of Pentecost, 37th Session of the General Council Meetings, 2008); "The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5, no. 1 (2002); Clarke, 6.

³⁴⁰ Gifford, "Expecting Miracles."

³⁴¹ Ibid.

This understanding is reminiscent of Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis in which he notes how Protestants link their material success and moral worth.³⁴²

The CoP's themes of material success as an indicator of moral worth find expression in the titles and themes of its conventions, preaching, songs, verses, and prayers.³⁴³ Opoku Onyinah notes that although the CoP's themes emphasize the success of the believer, "the Church stresses virtues of patience and holiness and discourages expectations of immediate returns."³⁴⁴ However, my respondents described how they had attended revivals of the CoP, where the Church's songs, prayers, preaching on success and breakthrough, emphasized these as divine rights and inheritance of the worshipper.

For my interviewees, the themes played out in their understandings of the West and their aspirations to go there. They said they were confident about their chances to travel because "as faithful worshippers, they expected God to reward them. A man said, "Overseas travel particularly to the West is part of the material success God bestows upon those who seek Him... God has said, seek ye first my kingdom and righteousness and then all other things including success both at home and abroad are guaranteed additional benefits."³⁴⁵ Another member, a forty-year-old male teacher who had plans to travel to Switzerland said he was very optimistic about the outcome of a visa interview because "international migration is part of God's promises of success to the faithful."³⁴⁶ Mrs. Frimpong, a 30-year-old second-hand cloth (*oburoni wawu*) trader who had dreams of re-uniting with her spouse in Holland soon, also shared her understandings of the travel she was preparing to embark on, as a "gift from God, a gift of breakthrough," echoing the Church's themes on "material success as a divine reward."³⁴⁷

³⁴² Gordon Marshall, *In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism : An Essay on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis* (London: Hutchinson: Hutchinson University Press, 1982); Ola Honningdal Grytten, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Entrepreneurship of the Norwegian Puritan Leader Hans Nielsen Hauge* (2013); Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution; a History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: SPCK, 2007); Britannica, "Protestant Ethic," in *Britannica Online Academic Edition* (2015); David J. Chalcraft, Austin Harrington, *The Protestant Ethic Debate Max Weber's Replies to His Critics, 1907-1910* (Ebrary Inc., 2001).

³⁴³ Gifford, "Expecting Miracles."

³⁴⁴ Personal communication with Opoku Onyinah at the CoP headquarters on the 22/02/2014. See also Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 16-17.

³⁴⁵ Personal communication with Mr Ansong.

³⁴⁶ Telephone communication with Ernest (a 33 years old teacher) who worships at the Darkuman Central Chapel of the CoP on 13/02/2015.

³⁴⁷ Personal communication with Mrs Frimpong at the PPC on 20/02/2014.

The point is, for worshippers who had plans to travel abroad, the CoP's general themes had specific meanings. As Daswani notes, Ghanaian Pentecostals believe that "international travel (to the West) is part of God's covenant with them as 'born-again.'"³⁴⁸ These respondents were simply applying the Church's themes to their specific situations as aspiring migrants. In the process of appropriating the themes, they contextualized the themes in order to create short stories to address their individual aspirations for travel, to inspire, boost confidence, and develop a sense of certainty.

Themes around which the CoP organizes its revival activities, such as conferences, provide contexts for prospective migrants to create narratives linked to international migration. These conferences do not specifically target overseas travel. Yet, because participants with aspirations of travelling overseas attend in order to bolster their chances of success, they apply the themes specifically to their situations. The CoP, like other Pentecostal groups announce their activities via billboard advertisements and on the social media. These themes offer insights into the kind of success, breakthroughs, and victories God intends to bring to the lives of the believers with different concerns. However, members had their own understandings of what the themes meant to them. Thus, a theme such as "supernatural acceleration or divine destiny" would have a completely different meaning for someone with unemployment or chronic health issues than someone with migration ambitions. In this way, such themes present what I refer to as, "fill in the blanks situation," and offer room for different forms of contextualization for members.

The members with international travel shared that they interpreted themes such as "divine acceleration" as signposts to their travel concerns. They said such themes spoke directly to their plans to migrate and reassured them of "'breakthroughs,' concerning travel preparations through 'divine acceleration.'"³⁴⁹ According to Essuman, one member, "divine acceleration and breakthroughs" referred to divine enablement that prevents travel visa denials or delays and ensures easy, fast, and a smooth travel process for the faithful.³⁵⁰ Kwabena, a final year polytechnic student shared with me how he and others contextualized

³⁴⁸ Daswani, "Ghanaian Pentecostal Prophets: Transnational Travel and (Im-)Mobility."; "Transformation and Migration among Members of a Pentecostal Church in Ghana and London."; "(in)Dividual Pentecostals in Ghana."

³⁴⁹ Personal communication with Essuman (a Business Administration student at the Pentecost University and a member of the Darkuman Assembly) on 17/02/2014.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

the theme on “supernatural acceleration” to mean, “Difficulties in the pre-migration process demands spiritual attention (divine acceleration).”³⁵¹ He attributed his positive attitude towards the challenges he was facing with his visa application process to his contextualization of the 2013 and 2014 revival conference themes at the Darkuman Central Chapel.³⁵² Figures 20 and 21 are the posters for the themes “supernatural acceleration” and "From a Curse to a Blessed Life" for the 2013 and 2014 revival meetings at the Darkuman CoP District (Central Chapel).



Figure 20. CoP (Darkuman Assembly) 2013 Revival Conference theme “Supernatural acceleration”

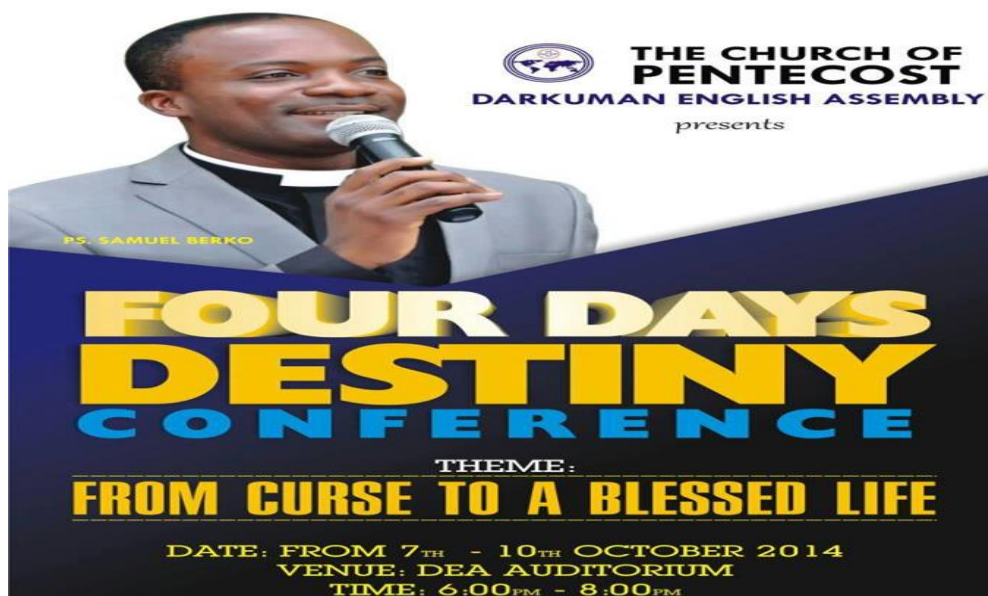


Figure 21. Theme for a CoP prayer conference

³⁵¹ Personal communication with Kwabena at the Darkuman Central Assembly on 18/02/2014.

³⁵² Ibid.

I must state that the 2.1million membership of the CoP includes the skilled and unskilled, the well-educated and the non-educated, the poor, and rich alike.³⁵³ I observed that the status or social class or occupation of these prospective migrants in the CoP influenced the individual interpretations and use of the themes of the Church's conferences, sermons, and doctrines. There was a tendency for the working class, unemployed, uneducated and semi-educated worshippers to find something in a theme, a scripture or a sermon that referred specifically to their situations. Nevertheless, the members who were highly educated or belonged to the elite of Ghanaian society were quite hesitant to relate particular themes of the conferences or sermons to their international migration plans. They said they were confident about their chances of success. Rather, they preferred to rely heavily on the counselling sessions during which pastors talked to them about what they should expect at the embassies, what they should do when they reached their destinations, and how they should comport themselves at border crossings. From the stories above, we see that the laity with travel plans, create their own meanings of the West, and overseas in general, from the Churches practices, to justify, and make sense of their migration aspirations. My respondents also shared with me that, apart from creating stories of the "West as paradise for the faithful," they had other pieces of stories that project international travel plans as ventures prone to spiritual hindrances and attacks. I have put together the stories in the next section to present the narrative in question.

4.2.2 "Travel plans as ventures prone to spiritual obstacles"

"Jealous people and evil agents can be among one's family, friends, and the community, so one must refrain from giving out information on travel plans to people, to prevent the 'agents' from spiritually terminating such plans."³⁵⁴ "Your dreams of travel can be sabotaged by your own family, when silence is not your friend... 1 Kings 13 gives us a clear example of what happens when we do not keep discrete our travel plans and aspirations. In the Chapter, a prophet was killed by lions when he revealed his travel plans to a fellow prophet."³⁵⁵ Moreover, "people with travel plans and aspirations attract envy, enemies, and malevolent forces, and so, such ventures should be kept secret. You cannot tell anyone your travel plans,

³⁵³ Personal communication with the Chairman of the CoP in his office at LA in Accra on 22/01/2014.

³⁵⁴ Personal communication with Mrs Frimpong at the PPC on 12/02/2014.

³⁵⁵ Personal communication with Quansah at the PPC on 12/02/2014.

for you do not know who is a witch, enemy, or has evil agenda.”³⁵⁶ “Sharing news of your travel plans to friends, relatives, and even as testimonies at Church exposes the smooth success of the travel project to your enemies of progress. When it comes to travel plans, aspirations, and preparations, silence, and discreteness are virtues that accompany its smooth success.”³⁵⁷ “The fear of the person who is closest to you at the time of your decision making to travel, is the beginning of travel breakthroughs.”³⁵⁸ The stories employ “African conversational style of blending proverbs in descriptions with particular reference to storytelling.”³⁵⁹ These proverbial forms of stories and other pieces of short stories, expressed the idea that travel plans are prone to spiritual attacks.

The narrative is not only providing an explanation for challenges which prospective migrants face, but also serves as a pointer and as an indicator of how aspiring migrants should conduct themselves with information concerning their travel plans. What this narrative tells us is that, in the context of Pentecostal MR, travel plans attain spiritual meanings and explanations. The narrative goes on to say that, aspiring migrants must still be aware that the mundane process itself attracts spiritual attacks because it is a spiritual venture as well, hence, one must take care.

Agbozo, a graduate student of the University of Ghana-Legon, and a member of the Church, told me of the spiritual measures he took because of a testimony he heard at Church. He explained that upon hearing many of such stories in the form of testimonies, he began to seek prayer support for himself against spiritual attacks as he prepared for his migration to France for further studies. “Even just last week Sunday, one of our deacons shared the testimony of a brother who was nearly denied his visa. The brother had gone to renew his visa at the Netherlands embassy, but was told that the photo on his passport was that of an elderly woman! He challenged that that was his own photo taken two years back. He was almost arrested.”³⁶⁰ Agbozo continued, “According the Elder, the brother called and requested for special prayers from the Church. On the fifth day of prayer and fasting, the

³⁵⁶ Personal communication with Nafisa.

³⁵⁷ Personal communication with Agnes at the PPC on 12/02/2014.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Chukuemeka Bosah, *Celebrating Chenua Achebe: Essays on His Life, Legacy and Works* (Ohio: Inkpot Quill, 2013), 36-45.

³⁶⁰ Personal communication with Agbozo on 14/01/2014.

Embassy approved and granted him the travel visa."³⁶¹ Agbozo emphasized, "This is the doing of the Lord, but also the intervention of the Church. If he had not called on the leaders of the Church for God to intervene for him, the brother would have lost his chance to study abroad or been arrested for no reason... I took this message for myself, because I know where I am coming from... I have struggled for admission and scholarship in Universities overseas."³⁶² The testimonies served as pointers for Agbozo, causing him to reassess his own traditional background and travel challenges, as part of his pre-migration precautions against spiritual attacks. Following the testimony, Agbozo had requested "collective prayers" from the youth ministry, during a youth revival meeting at the branch of the Church at Atomic Junction, Accra (PIWC-Atomic). He described how he had also engaged in the Church's prayer retreats to address fears and anxieties concerning his travel plans, and "waited on the Lord" for three days at the Pentecost Convention Centre (PCC) at Gomoa Fete in the Central Region of Ghana.³⁶³

The act of giving testimonies at Church or to friends and relatives, while in the process acquiring travel documents such as passports, visa application forms, or even financial assistance had to be kept secret. Even though testimonies are viewed as "not being sufficient enough to justify beliefs in the occurrence of miracles," my interviewees demonstrated that testimonies in the Church justify their belief in travel breakthroughs.³⁶⁴ There were stories of how people experienced challenges with getting sponsors, bank statements from relatives and friends, and visa denials, when they shared testimonies of their progress with the process. For Effe, she vowed to keep her progress to herself until she got her travel visa.

According to Effe, "there are enemies of progress who join the Church or tap into words wherever they are, to access information concerning the faithful believer. These enemies then cause confusion, denials, constraints to sabotage any further progress in the

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Personal communication with Agbozo on 14/01/2014.

³⁶³ The Pentecost Convention Centre (PCC) was inaugurated in October, 2013 by President Dramani Mahama, the chairman Opoku Onyinah, and other key leaders of the church as the first its kind in Ghana. The centre serves the various religious purposes including, conventions, provides spaces for conferences, healing, and prayer retreats for individual members, groups of the church, and other religious organizations. For details, see: [The Pentecost Ultra Modern prayer Centre](#). (Accessed 23/06/2015).

³⁶⁴ Dorothy Coleman, "Baconian Probability and Hume's Theory of Testimony," *Hume Studies* 27, no. 2 (2001): 195.

application process.”³⁶⁵ Efeei's story is one that cautions against sharing news of progress with people even in Church, for fear of being under spiritual attack. Here, aspiring migrants use such stories to caution themselves.

According to Pastor Berko, testimonies at the Church are stories about individual experiences that members share concerning special interventions of God in their lives.³⁶⁶ Testimonies attest to the power of Christ or the Holy Spirit; deepening the faith and convictions of the congregation.³⁶⁷ The testimonies offer life lessons that other members can emulate to bolster their confidence, especially for those worshippers seeking forms of divine intervention in their own projects.³⁶⁸ “Testimony times or times for testimony” are part of the Church’s activities dedicated to enabling the congregation to hear about divine interventions, and breakthroughs in the lives of other members.³⁶⁹ The members share their testimonies as either songs or stories.³⁷⁰

Those who share the testimonies are part of the congregation; members they know, interact with, and who can attest to the authenticity of their testimonies.³⁷¹ All the 20 respondents talked about how the testimonies of others and the act of giving testimonies prompted them to create notions about international travel. The notions included, “that for travel visa acquisition to be successful, a prospective migrant had to either keep secret the plan, or present it to either their district pastors, elders of the Church, prayer leaders or prayer partners, only when the ritual experts win their trust and would pray with them.”³⁷² Keeping discrete one’s travel plan was just one way to prevent spiritual attacks. Having a covenant, or taking a pledge, oath, or promise to align your travel aspirations to the Church’s mission of proselytizing outside Ghana was sure way to enjoy “spiritual covering and protection” from spiritual attacks.

³⁶⁵ Personal communication with Efeei at the CoP.

³⁶⁶ A personal telephone communication with Pastor Samuel Berko at the Darkuman Central of the CoP on the 12/02/2014. Pastor Berko was the district Pastor at the Darkuman Central Assembly at the time of the research, but was transferred to Kenya to take up a position as the National head in September, 2015. <https://piwckaneshie.wordpress.com/2015/05/12/c-o-p-full-white-paper-2015-international-missions/>. (Accessed 13/06/2015).

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ A personal telephone conversation with Pastor Samuel Berko at the Darkuman Central Chapel of the CoP on 12/02/2015.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

My respondents said they knew that “the success of their travel ambitions depended on their genuine connection with this missionary agenda.”³⁷³ Others talked about how the Church’s overseas missionary policies encouraged them to make pledges for their participation in ‘the mission’ if their travel preparations succeed. For these respondents, the pledges were *sine qua non* for the success of their travel plans. There were pledges such as, “I will be instrumental in furthering the Church’s agenda if God would guide, support, and enable my travel.”³⁷⁴ Certainly, this is a narrative in the form of pledges of spiritual obligation for the aspiring migrants. In such cases, we can state that the Church’s overseas agenda informed and inspired members’ understandings of their travel plans.

Van Dijk notes two related teachings that the Pentecostal churches use as rationale for their ‘overseas-oriented’ outreach and aspirations to internationalize. The first notion is the idea that “Ghana has become ‘too small a place’ for the Pentecostal message.”³⁷⁵ The second, which is related to the first is that the “inter-penetration of other cultural contexts deepens, enriches, and essentializes religious experiences of the Ghanaian Pentecostal worshipper.”³⁷⁶ The leadership of the CoP shares the same agenda.³⁷⁷ Onyinah added that the Church has a stance that the return of Christ is imminent and so the Church has a “policy of urgency” to send out pastors to foreign lands as missionaries, even those without formal training.³⁷⁸ The Church encourages lay worshippers to also share in the missionary activities, wherever they would find themselves.³⁷⁹ As a result, the CoP is among the successful African churches having lay missionaries in Europe and elsewhere.³⁸⁰ According to the leadership of the Church, it is present in over 90 nations across the globe and it continues to grow especially in the West. One of its practices is to proudly display on its premises the flags of the nations that it has reached out to. Figure 22 shows a photo of the flags of some of the 90 nations the Church displays on its premise.

³⁷³ Personal communication with Mr Ansong (an Agricultural extension officer and a member of the Darkuman English Assembly of the CoP) on 13/02/2014.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Dijk, 222.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Onyinah, "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," 216-46.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 228.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Gerrie Ter Haar, "Strangers in the Promised Land: African Christians in Europe," *Exchange* 24, no. 1 (1995): 1-33; *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe* (Cardiff Academic Press, 1998).



Figure 22. A photo of the flags of over 90 nations

The Church prides itself of its “non-negotiable aggressive evangelism policy.”³⁸¹ Some of my interlocutors said the “Church’s agenda for internationalization and its testimonies of success” as well as the display of the nations it has established itself, appealed to them in two ways: First, the Church is spiritually fortified to withstand both spiritual and physical obstacles against going overseas, hence its presence globally. Second, in keeping a spiritual bond or pledge with the Church in its global outreach mission, one was guaranteed of spiritual protection whenever the Church prays for its mission. As a result, my respondents had made pledges and promises to play active roles in the overseas proselytizing mission of the Church. They were “not just people who would just travel, but as travellers who would carry ‘the Pentecost fire and the message of the gospel.’”³⁸² A few justified their desperation in the preparations to travel to the sense of urgency with which the Church has to send the gospel of salvation abroad.³⁸³ What is important here is how members understood their migration in a religious way. Members saw their own migrations as processes they needed to undertake to fulfill spiritual obligations and goals in exchange for spiritual protection against spiritual

³⁸¹ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 52.

³⁸² Personal communication with Emelia at the PPC on 01/02/2014.

³⁸³ Ibid.

attacks. The Church inadvertently contributed to its production. Its mission to extend outside Ghana, however, informed how these individual worshippers planned their travel aspirations.

Discreteness and making pledges alone, however, were not enough to ensure that their travel aspirations were secured from spiritual attacks; my respondents also shared individual stories, which centred on the use of specific rituals, ritual items, and images as the crucial spiritual mechanisms for protecting and enabling the unfolding of their travel plans.

4.2.3 Rituals and Mediums as Necessary Spiritual Devices for Travel

I use Emelia's narration of a popular story about the importance of rituals and its mediums among aspiring migrants at the CoP. "Every one of us here come from a home or a community that pours libation to other gods, or have connections with the worship of ancestral spirits. With such a background, every believer needs to go through "deliverance," or be in constant touch with the Holy Spirit, the power, name, and blood of Jesus. These must be one's spiritual weapons before embarking on any form of breakthrough project (including overseas travel)." ³⁸⁴ Moreover, "the manifestations and confessions of demons during deliverance ministrations for members at the PPC and other CoP centres are evidence of the ongoing war between the traditional past, curses, demons, and other malevolent forces against us and our destinies... There is the need, for constant renewal of one's relationship with Jesus and connection with his prophets for spiritual guidance, especially, in the travel endeavours." ³⁸⁵ The two stories from Emelia and Efei that I have pieced together here are examples of the stories that identify the need for ritual and forms of ritual symbolic mediums as crucial to aspiring migrants before or as they embark on their travel plans. What is important here is how deliverance practices of the Church acquire new meanings in the context of grassroots narrative of international migration. Deliverance separates people from the religion of the soil, and for internationalizing work of the Church, and so projects them into international spaces.

These prospective migrants draw from the practice of "deliverance" in the Church especially at the prayer centres to produce such narrative. The practice involves prayerfully "'breaking (people) free' from the influence of witchcraft and allied demonic powers that

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Personal communication with Efei at the Darkuman Central Chapel on 08/01/2014.

bring afflictions, curses, and failures in life.”³⁸⁶ The practice enjoins believers to take precautionary measures for protection and triumph in all of their endeavours through the power of the Holy Spirit, the blood, and the name of Jesus.³⁸⁷ Other measures include being in contact with Pentecostal ritual experts, fasting, ecstatic praying, and attending church regularly.³⁸⁸ In addition to these, individual worshippers must participate in the exorcist activities integral to the Church’s “deliverance” programmes.³⁸⁹

Opoku Onyinah has coined the term “witchdemonology” to describe “deliverance” activities at the prayer centres. He states that the activities had replaced the anti-witchcraft shrines of the Ghanaian traditional religion (ATRs) and exorcist activities of the African Indigenous Churches (AICs).³⁹⁰ The point is, although the shrines and exorcist activities of the AICs exist and serve similar functions, “Deliverance” has become more popular and widely accepted especially among the Pentecostals. According to Onyinah, “the concept ‘witchdemonology’ is the conglomeration of beliefs and practices of African witchcraft and Western Christian concepts of demonology and exorcism.”³⁹¹ Onyinah notes how a genre of teachings on ancestral curses has emerged within the Pentecostal deliverance ministries. Among the genre of teachings on ancestral curses is the belief that the consequences of sins that progenitors committed are recurrent in individual families.³⁹² The teachings add that the signs of “the curses in a person’s life include chronic disappointments, failures, denials, unnatural deaths, and financial insufficiencies.”³⁹³ Beside the signs indicating ancestral curse(s), the Pentecostals believe that there are also signs that can identify a demon-possessed person.

³⁸⁶ Opoku Onyinah, “Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Contemporary Africa: Ghana as a Case Study,” in *Spirit in the World* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 181-202.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ van Dijk, 148.

³⁸⁹ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pulling Down Strongholds: Evangelism, Principalities and Powers and the African Pentecostal Imagination,” *International Review of Mission* 96, no. 382-383 (2007): 181-202; Onyinah, “Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Contemporary Africa: Ghana as a Case Study.”

³⁹⁰ “Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost.”; Meyer.

³⁹¹ Onyinah, “Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost,” 336.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Onyinah, “Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History,” 107-34.

The belief is that “demons enter people and pass on within their families or on to other people.”³⁹⁴ Onyinah refers to such demonic transfers as demonic “doorways” or “openings.”³⁹⁵ More importantly, idolatry of any sort is a major demonic “doorway.”³⁹⁶ The teachings also indicated that anyone including Christians could become demon possessed or could inherit ancestral curses.³⁹⁷ These concepts on “witchcraft and ancestral curses are based on an African cosmology.”³⁹⁸ The cosmology attributes “misfortunes in its various forms to some ‘causal others,’ namely evil forces.”³⁹⁹ The teachings on “witchdemonology” posit that in addition to salvation, every Christian needs “deliverance” to be “set free” from malevolent agents or “demonic doorways” and ancestral curses.⁴⁰⁰ Because of such theology, churches such as CoP have established prayer groups, and residential prayer centres.⁴⁰¹ “Deliverance” has become a major activity in these centres. It is then not out of place that my respondents tapped into such understandings in creating their narrative that every aspiring traveller needs such deliverance rituals before embarking on international migration plans. Part of this, is the fear that ancestral curses, demonic doorways, and evil agents can derail their travel plans.

My visits to the CoP in Darkuman Assembly and PPC confirmed the importance of “deliverance” activities within the CoP. At these centres, the leaders performed “deliverance” at the “Fridays’ Gilgal Nights,” and the Mondays’ dawn “Holy Ghost Clinic.” The PPC also had daily morning and evening prayers during their “deliverance services” as well as “Friday night vigils.” Figure 23 shows “deliverance” activity at the Darkuman Central “Fridays’ Gilgal” prayer

³⁹⁴ Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘The Evil You Have Done Can Ruin the Whole Clan’: African Cosmology, Community, and Christianity in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*,” *Studies in World Christianity* 16, no. 1 (2010); Elom Dovlo, “Witchcraft in Contemporary Ghana,” in *Imagining Evil: Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Gerrie Ter Haar (Trenton NJ: African World Press, 2007); Meyer.

³⁹⁵ Onyinah; “Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost.”

³⁹⁶ “Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost.”; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mission to “Set the Captives Free”: Healing, Deliverance, and Generational Curses in Ghanaian Pentecostalism,” *International Review of Mission* 93, no. 370-371 (2004).

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Asamoah-Gyadu; Onyinah.

³⁹⁹ Quayesi-Amakye, *Christology and Evil in Ghana : Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology*, 49; Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘The Evil You Have Done Can Ruin the Whole Clan’: African Cosmology, Community, and Christianity in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*.”; Asamoah-Gyadu; Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values : An Introduction* (Philadelphia, PA: Sankofa, 1996).

⁴⁰⁰ Onyinah.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

meetings, where Elder Berko lays hands on members and “delivers” them through the power of the Holy Spirit from demonic attacks and afflictions.



Figure 23. Elder Berko performing "Deliverance" at the Darkuman Central Chapel

My focus here is on the ways in which the teaching and practices of “deliverance,” especially about how to protect one’s projects from demonic attacks, curses, afflictions, and derailments conditioned the minds of my respondents (prospective migrants) who participated in these deliverance activities. Many of my interlocutors shared how they tapped into these Church doctrines to create travel stories, that they used as the blueprint for the precautionary measures they had taken or were about to take for protection in their preparations to travel. They stated that even though the teachings on “witchdemonology” offered a road map for arming themselves against malevolent forces that inflict pains of visa denials, financial constraints, aborting of travel plans, and accidents or even deaths in the process.⁴⁰² Individual members with travel agendas had popular sayings that, “deliverance is meant for everybody including prospective travellers. Whether you are in Ghana or planning to travel or have travelled before, you must go through it. When they deliver you, then you

⁴⁰² Personal communication with Nafisatu (a nurse) at the PPC on 13/01/2014.

become more confident that 'closed doors' will open to you and 'travel breakthroughs' would follow."⁴⁰³

The point is, these popular stories disengage or rather disentangle individuals from their previous existence, bonds, and relations; constituting them as "born again."⁴⁰⁴ The teaching and practices of "deliverance" inform worshippers' fears and sensitivities to the possibility of their travel projects derailing because of attacks from agents of harm and offer them religio-cultural models for how to enlist the help of the Holy Spirit to combat these agents of supernatural harm.⁴⁰⁵ Here, the narratives offer the aspiring migrants, basis for engaging rituals and the use of symbolic ritual symbols and paraphernalia, both physical and spiritual.

According to members, they do not construct all their narrative concerning the need for deliverance prior by complying with the Church's teachings and practices. They stated how they contest several key aspects of the Church's teachings and practices. For example, the Church's notion of "deliverance" posits that witchcraft and ancestral spirits do exist, but once a convert is committed to Jesus Christ and is baptized in the Holy Spirit, the traditional past and spirits no longer have any rights over the believer.⁴⁰⁶ However, some of the members contest such teachings to create a new story to make sense of their international travel plans, members with overseas travel ambitions contest the teachings of the Church that seem to hinder their quests to use some ritual practices to aid them in their migration. The discussion shows that in the construction of Pentecostal MR grassroots narrative, contestation of Pentecostal teachings becomes necessary when such narratives hinder the production of the worshippers desired travel narratives.

Deliverance practice also offers religio-cultural models for how to go about planning and carrying out a migration project. What we see from the examples is the emergence of a grassroots narrative where misfortunes link with international migration. They originate from worshippers' own experiences and their use of the teachings of the CoP to understand these

⁴⁰³Personal communication with Nafisa (a trader and a member of the Darkuman Central Chapel) on 24/01/2014.

⁴⁰⁴Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵de Bruijn.

⁴⁰⁶Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 16. The believer is one who has received Jesus Christ as personal saviour and has been baptized with water and the Holy Spirit.

experiences. However, these understandings become part of shared popular narratives on the religious or spiritual meaning of the misfortunes people experience when they are preparing to travel to the West or when they live there as migrants. The point is that these popular stories are part of Ghana's Pentecostal MR and that they inform, motivate, direct, bolster, and are signposts for prospective migrants.

We must understand the grassroots narrative of "deliverance" against the backdrop that specific Pentecostal practices inspire "specific understandings of mobility in Ghana."⁴⁰⁷ Worshippers live their religions outside the institutional walls of their churches. In their day-to-day lives, worshippers turn to the teachings and idioms of their churches for meanings. They borrow from these teachings, reproducing, and recreating them as they apply the teachings to situations in their lives.

Doctrines on the use of certain symbolic mediums, particularly, the image, name, and blood of Jesus as necessary ritual weapons to ward off evil, bless, protect, and heal one's life provided a different basis for creating grassroots narrative on the use of mediums, for motivation, inspiration, and justification in their preparations to travel. My respondents adopted the teachings and reinterpreted them to meet travel needs. Some of them preferred to view the paintings of King Solomon, Jesus, and his disciples on the inner walls of the PPC building as suitable mediums for travel protection and as the linkage with the rest of the world.

According to Elder Kissi, the paintings of Jesus are there on all the inner walls of the Centre to draw the individual's attention to the place (holy grounds) he/she is. "This place is not a club or disco or classroom, but a place to meet Jesus. The paintings are also for members who cannot read the Bible or are not able to visually capture the messages they hear or read from the Bible."⁴⁰⁸ Elder Kissi is one of the leaders, who write down the details and prayer requests of counselees before they see the prophet Daniel Owusu in his small consulting room at the Centre. Elder Koomson who is the personal assistant to Prophet Owusu added, "The paintings are mainly the key activities of Jesus and other great figures in the Bible. These paintings are to helpion hundreds of people who come here every week, to put a face to the Jesus we preach about to them. The paintings are also to let the people

⁴⁰⁷ de Bruijn, 64.

⁴⁰⁸ Personal communication with Elder Kissi at the Paradise Prayer Centre on 15/01/2014. 'Elder' is a name given to a leader who is not yet ordained as a pastor at the CoP.

know that in such a place, “the Jesus who is ready to meet them at their points of needs,” surrounds them.⁴⁰⁹ The Elders indicated the Centre’s purpose of the paintings. However, these paintings have acquired different and “popular meanings” for members who frequent the Prayer Centre. There were stories of how these images of Jesus came alive to heal, protect, smiled at, and became active in members’ dreams and lives.

Members with travel ambitions shared their stories of how the images spoke differently to their needs. For some of these members, these paintings linked them to the rest of the world. For many, “Jesus is a figure that links all nations to himself through his death on the cross” as shown in the paintings. Laryea, a businessperson who travels to Dubai to buy electronic gadgets, said he goes to the Centre to spend time there to connect with the images of Jesus and be under the power of the protection of Jesus for his trips. He claimed that he always felt surrounded with the images of Jesus. He emphasized, “His presence comes alive in these paintings.”⁴¹⁰ Laryea added, “As a traveller your life can be in danger at any time, either in the aeroplane or car or even as you walk in the streets doing your business, and so, you need the constant protection of Jesus who also travelled extensively doing his father’s business but finished all before his death.”⁴¹¹ These sayings were common among many of my interlocutors. Laryea concluded that, “The teachings about Jesus’ images and the images themselves, remind me (him) of the miracles Jesus came to do on earth; that motivate me (him) to believe that he is still alive and active.”⁴¹² I observed how some of the members would normally go before the paintings of Jesus when praying at the Centre. They mostly stood or knelt in front of the paintings of Jesus that depicted him (Jesus) as calming a stormy sea and walking on water.

Bismark, (a trader) explained that he stood or knelt in front of such paintings to pray for travelling mercies, protection, and successful business. He did this practice every time he had to travel because “those paintings of Jesus portrayed Jesus as having the power to provide breakthroughs in one’s journeys.”⁴¹³ This is because the image shows Jesus calming the sea by raising his hands in a boat. “The journeys of the disciples would have been futile because of the angry sea, had it not been Jesus in the boat. For me, whenever I come here to

⁴⁰⁹ Personal communication with Prophet Owusu at the Paradise Prayer Centre on 18/01/2014.

⁴¹⁰ Personal communication with Laryea (A Ghanaian-Italian *borga*) at the PPC on 20/01/2014.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Personal communication with Bismark at the PPC on 21/1/2014.

pray and sometimes touched these images, I travel to Italy in and out safely. This is because Jesus calms any stormy travelling situation for me."⁴¹⁴ Bismark connected his decision to view the paintings for his travel concerns on the teachings the centre prescribes, but he based the appropriation of the images on a creative rendition of those teachings to inform his travel plans. Figures 24 and 25 show some paintings of Jesus at the prayer centre. There were worshippers who are 'waiting on the Lord.' They were either sitting or lying down in front of the images.



Figure 24. Paintings of Jesus on the inner walls of the PPC

All of the respondents at the PPC had different reinterpretations and renditions of the use of the images of Jesus at the Centre. They explained that the "images of Jesus are symbols that connect them abroad; the images connect them spiritually to a global Christian community and physically link them to a global community."⁴¹⁵ They appreciate Jesus for his foreign features. Mr Ekow Mensah, a watch repairer and a member of the CoP who frequents the prayer Centre illustrated his appreciation for Jesus's foreign features. "When you see the image of Jesus on the walls, you see he is not from here like the gods of our land and yet chooses to identify with my needs and protect me; I feel more connected to 'his world.'"⁴¹⁶ This practice signals a rootedness in traditional ways of accessing spiritual powers through

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Personal communication with Ato Quashie at the Pentecost Convention Centre in Ghana on 28/12/2014.

⁴¹⁶ Personal communication with Ekow Mensah at the Paradise Prayer Centre on 14/02/2014.

cults from afar.⁴¹⁷ It is an attempt to fit Jesus and the salvific significance of his cross into their social lives through these images.⁴¹⁸



Figure 25. A picture of Mensah "waiting on the Lord" and sitting in front of the paintings of Jesus

This is not to say that there is a general feature of the narratives examined here. Although the Church as part of global Christianity is indigenized in the Ghanaian cultural context, the paintings of Jesus as foreign image appealed to the members for constructing travel narratives. Jesus is the figure that links them to the Christian and global community. At a time when people eagerly seek travelling overseas to link up with the wider Western community, striving to attain travelling documents in order to migrate, they appreciate the images of a foreign Jesus as the medium.⁴¹⁹ Such connections with the paintings of Jesus mediate global connectivity. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that members of the Church ritually touch, sit or kneel before it in prayer, and gaze at the paintings of Jesus as spiritual connections to overseas, where they anticipate travelling to.

⁴¹⁷ Meyer.

⁴¹⁸ C. Nyamiti, *African Christologies Today*, ed. Robert Schreiter, *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999), 3-23; Godwin I. Akper, "The Person of Jesus Christ in Contemporary African Christological Discourse," *Religion & Theology* 14, no. 3-4 (2007): 225; Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa : History and Experience* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004).

⁴¹⁹ Birgit Meyer, "Mediating Absence—: Effecting Spiritual Presence Pictures and the Christian Imagination," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 78, no. 4 (2011).

More important to how the images of Jesus link these members up with the wider world, is the indigenous ways of dealing with spirits. According to traditional cosmology, humans are responsible for creating spaces in which spirits would dwell.⁴²⁰ The point is, people, engage the invisible forces via particular (human-made) media in which spirits become present through practices of animation.⁴²¹ The worshippers deploy the animations about Jesus images, in the context of the travel narratives in the CoP's PPC. Although they stress the problem of idolatry in their rejection of the images of Jesus, in the instance of the travel religiosity, members use these symbols as the medium for linking up with the wider world. A number of the respondents would stress that although it is wrong to use a picture of Jesus as an idol, it was possible to use the image as a symbol. "The image just helps to put a face to the man Jesus they are seeking travel help from."⁴²² The point being that they do not attribute any power to the picture per se, but as a medium to that power.⁴²³ Consequently, members with travel concerns depend largely on such narrative to provide the needed connection and bolstering for their endeavours.

4.3 Conclusion

To conclude the discussion, I would like to reflect on the themes in this Chapter. I have shown that narratives are an important aspect of Ghana's Pentecostal MR. I suggested that we must look beyond teachings and practices of churches for worshippers' constructs of international migration. Following this suggestion, I argued that although the CoP does not have any specially designed theology or narrative of international migration for members, its worshippers appropriate the Church's teachings as well as practices and apply these to their travel concerns in order to make sense of their travel aspirations.

My point here is that there is a form of "theologizing from below" taking place; a kind of belief system of the laity, scattered as bits and pieces of stories. These understandings facilitate travels in many ways. As I have demonstrated, members use these understandings to interpret, justify, and bolster their pre-migration experiences and endeavours. Some members derive guidelines for these understandings as to how to conduct themselves while preparing to migrate. These popular interpretations, contestations, reconfigurations, and

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 108-112.

⁴²¹ Ibid. Animation here refers to the practice of seeing spiritual mediums to be full of life and vigor.

⁴²² Personal communication with Abam Kofi at the PPC on 10/02/2014.

⁴²³ Meyer, "Mediating Absence—: Effecting Spiritual Presence Pictures and the Christian Imagination," 114-18.

rendition, of the Church's teachings constitute lay perspectives on the Church's doctrines, especially in relation to international migration. The grassroots narrative situates international migration as a spiritual process, the West as some kind heaven, and success with visa acquisition as a form of blessing or reward. They posit that only God has chosen people will migrate successfully. I have also shown how the Church directly or indirectly provides spaces and resources that these prospective migrants appropriate to create the narratives to justify, bolster, and support their travel concerns.

From the discussion, it is clear that members link travel, Pentecostal symbols, morality, and divinity. International migration is a prerogative of moral actors, "abroad" as the place for harvesting divine reward, and Jesus as an international figure. There are ways that Ghanaian Pentecostals link travel, morality, and place. The discussions in the Chapter have demonstrated that in CoP's expression of MR, narratives provide inspiration and justification for travel endeavours, and serve as blueprints for the measures worshippers use to safeguard their travel plans from natural and supernatural harm. In the next Chapters, I will discuss the journey of the Pentecostal form of MR into the Australian diaspora and the diaspora portion of this MR by focusing on the extensions of these Churches in Australia.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMING TO AUSTRALIA: GHANA'S PENTECOSTAL MR AND THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST

5.0 Introduction

This Chapter builds on Chapters Three and Four, where I discussed how prospective migrant members of the PCK and CoP in Ghana, respectively, engaged Pentecostal MR in the pre-migration phase. In those Chapters, I addressed the rituals and grassroots narratives employed for international migration, particularly, in the quest to secure travel visas. In this Chapter, I use data from migrant members of the two Churches' extensions in Australia, to examine MR in the transition period of the migration process – the period between securing of a visa and arrival in the new land, Australia. My analysis builds upon the work of scholars such as Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Ebaugh who have highlighted the role that religion plays in the various stages of migration.⁴²⁴ I analyse the transition period in relation to three stages—pre-departure, transit, and arrival in Australia. The Chapter identifies key ways in which MR operates in these contexts, and the purposes it serves. Focusing once more on rituals and narratives, I highlight MR's role in meaning-making and in creating continuity in the transit phase of the migration process.

I argue that the use of MR in the pre-migratory phase has consequences for the journey itself; shaping and informing the process. People who participate in the pre-migratory phase of MR tend to continue the practice during the journey. The journey ensures the continuity of MR, that is, from the departure stage, through the journey stage, and to the arrival in the host land. Using religion for protection, survival, guidance, and as a meaning-making mechanism during the journey to Australia, prospective migrant members of the CoP and the PCK continue and carry MR in the journey to their destination points. The journey is the process by which Ghana's MR makes entry into the Australian diaspora.

To demonstrate my arguments, I use data from both Churches in Ghana and Australia. However, I focus more on the data from the Churches in Australia. I have organized the Chapter into three main sections. The first section will offer a brief historical account of Ghanaian emigration to Australia and identify this migrant community in Australia. The

⁴²⁴ Hagan and Ebaugh; Hagan.

particular focus will be on the PCM and CoPS migrants.⁴²⁵ The second section, which is the focus of the Chapter, will discuss the Churches' migrants' accounts of MR in their journeys with a focus on how MR rituals and narratives facilitated the journeys. The accounts are drawn from individual worshippers' retrospective narrations of their journeys to Australia that I put together to draw a composite picture of the phenomenon. I will analyze the material about rituals that were utilized in the three phases of the journey – preparation, transit, and arrival. I will then consider three key composite narratives that shaped migrants' understandings and interpretations of their experiences in the migration process. I will conclude the Chapter by reflecting on the themes that emerged in the discussions.

5.1 Ghanaian Emigration to Australia

The journey of the Ghanaian migrant worshippers in the PCM and CoPS is not isolated from Ghanaian migration to Australia. Ghanaian presence in Australia began with the arrival of Ghana students who were under the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan in the 1960's.⁴²⁶ The gradual removal of the white Australia policy also allowed migrations of Ghanaian refugees to Australia.⁴²⁷ Among my thirty interviewees from both Churches, were members who had migrated to Australia since the 1960s and 1990s. According to members of both Churches, from the year 2001 to 2014, they received another group of Ghanaian migrants in Australia.⁴²⁸ The migrants included men and women who had travelled to Australia as professionals, or families and relatives of earlier migrants.⁴²⁹ The professionals were medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses, traders, self-employed business owners, or tertiary students before their journeys to Australia. The rest, however, were hustlers, eight of whom sojourned briefly in Europe and other Western countries as refugees before moving on to Australia.

⁴²⁵ PCM refers the Power Chapel in Melbourne and CoPS is the Church of Pentecost in Sydney.

⁴²⁶ Graeme Hugo, "Migration between Africa and Australia: A Demographic Perspective, a Background Paper for African Australians," *Review of Human rights and Social Inclusion* (2009): 116-27; Obeng-Odoom; Mena, "Australia : Australian Bureau of Statistics Conducting Census Field Test," (2014).

⁴²⁷ Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Fact Sheet 8-Abolition of the White Australia Policy, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).

⁴²⁸ Telephone communication with Apostle Peter Andah of the CoP at Perth and Pastor Bruce of the PCK at Melbourne on 25/05/2014.

⁴²⁹ Personal communication with the *Asante Hema* (Monica) of Australia, a professional nurse and a member of the CoP Sydney, Australia on 27/05/2014.

Not every interviewee travelled directly from Ghana to Australia. For some, the indirect journey was tortuous and took many years. They settled in Europe after crossing the Sahara desert on foot. Others crossed the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa to Spain and Italy on rafts. Three interviewees told me of the hardship they had to endure on such journeys. The professional workers and graduate students could boast of smooth one-way journeys to Australia. However, for those who had journeyed to Australia on visitors' visas and stayed illegally, the situation was worse.

The latest national census in 2011 recorded 3,866 Ghanaian migrants in Australia (Ghana-born Australians).⁴³⁰ The majority of these migrants (1,969) reside in New South Wales, Victoria (666), Queensland (359), and Western Australia (435). The rest of the migrants reside in Tasmania and South Australia. Sydney, the state capital of New South Wales, has been one of the two important cities of Ghanaian migrations to Australia.⁴³¹ Melbourne, Victoria's coastal capital, has been the second important centre of Ghanaian migrations to Australia.⁴³² My respondents at the PCM and CoPS were drawn to Sydney and Melbourne because of the notable presence of other Ghanaian expatriates in these cities.⁴³³ According to the 2011 census, over 50% of Ghanaian-born Australians (3,866) are living in Sydney, while 17.2% live in Melbourne.⁴³⁴ Figure 26 shows the Australian Bureau of Statistics' distribution of the Ghanaian migrant population in Australia.

⁴³⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, "Community Information Summary Ghana-Born," ed. Immigration and Citizenship (Canberra: Australian Government, 2013).

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo (residing pastor at the CoPS) on 23/07/2014. He is also a Computer software engineer in Sydney.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

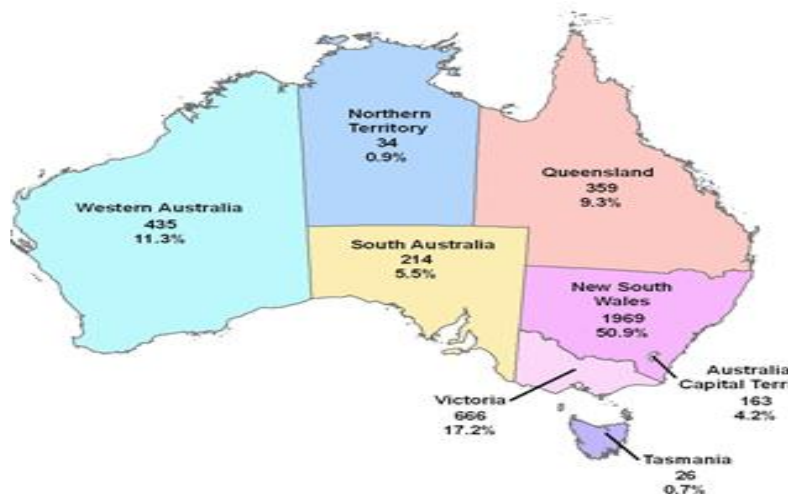


Figure 26. The 2011 Geographical distribution of Ghana-born Australians in Australia (Courtesy, ABS)

The statistics on the Ghana-born Australians provide an understanding of the nature of the migratory patterns and the category of Ghanaian migrants who embarked on the journey to Australia that I will be discussing in the following sections. The background is also necessary to understand the experiences that informed their use of MR rituals and narratives in the journey to Australia.

5.2 The Journey to Australia and the Transit-Phase of MR

This section provides a discussion of how the Ghanaian migrants' journey to Australia unfolded; the pre-departure, the journey, and arrival. I use the phrase "transit-phase" to describe MR, prior departure, through the journey, and upon arrival in Australia. The phase involves a formal religious service where the church or the family and the traveller pray for the safety and smoothness of the journey.⁴³⁵ The phase also involves prospective migrants' reliance on the spiritual support from religious leaders and relatives in the homeland, as they undertake the arduous and sometimes dangerous journeys to the destinations.⁴³⁶ This period involves when the traveller makes contacts using communication networks and the social media, with the home pastors and other ritual experts of the Churches during the journey, mainly to provide updates, and to receive guidance, prayers, and rituals upon arrival [arrival

⁴³⁵Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants' Use of Religion in the Migration Process," in *International Migration Review* (2003).

⁴³⁶ Moses Biney, "Singing the Lord's Song in a Foreign Land: Spirituality, Community and Identity in a Ghanaian Immigrant Congregation," in *African Immigrant Religions in America*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona and Regina Gemignani (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 231.

rituals]. The arrival rituals are mainly thanksgiving practices, where migrants fulfil promises made prior to the journey or new ones enacted. More so, during such practices, they make new pleas in the form of prayer requests for the success and protection of the purpose for which they made the journey. What is more important is the way the Churches' MR was at the centre of the journeys. The transit-phase MR in both Churches involves two main religious practices—rituals and narratives.

5.2.1 Rituals for the Pre-departure, the Journey, and Arrival in the host land

For migrants whose journeys involved the use of legitimate or legal channels such as those who travelled on students,¹ or visitors,¹ or business travel visas the rituals performed during the transit phase were in three stages: pre-departure, during the journey, and upon arrival. The discussion focuses on rituals for the pre-departure. The focus reflects the proliferation of rituals in this phase, where migrants have access to known ritual agents. It also reflects the belief that the pre-departure rituals have the greatest impact on the journey. In the subsections below, I will describe these rituals, demonstrating how they ensure the continuous practice of MR and the transfer of MR to Australia from Ghana.

5.2.1a Pre-departure

The pre-departure period is a crucial ritual time for the traveller. The period is characterized by mixed feelings of excitement, anxiety, and stress, because “preparations before the trip may make the journey smooth voyage or a bumpy ride, successful or truncated journey.”⁴³⁷ Both the traveller and the prophets/pastors recognize the need for rituals that would ensure a smooth voyage. During the pre-departure rituals, trusted family and friends of the traveller partake in the process. The prophets design the pre-departure rituals to produce “journey mercies, or travel mercies,” for the prospective migrant. “Travel mercies” connotes a popular expression of supernatural enabling power to travel safely.⁴³⁸ The expression describes requests these prospective migrants made to God to protect them from the inconveniences,

⁴³⁷Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 23.

⁴³⁸ Travel mercies, also referred to in other Pentecostal parlance as spiritual travel permit or relevance (also described on page 178) are forms of creolization—these Pentecostals draw on English originals, but are transformed or changed in the Ghanaian Pentecostal imaginary to constitute specialized terms within a globalized charismatic language. The original in idiomatic English language is “travelling mercies” and it refers to a providential provision rather personal power.

difficulties, and dangers associated with travelling.⁴³⁹ The rituals are to guarantee the smooth transitioning of the journey from homeland to the destination.

Typically, the first step is for the prospective migrant to testify in church about his or her success with the visa process and make a special appeal to the congregation or pastor for special prayers for travel mercies. Some prospective travellers would rather share news about their successes only with a pastor, out of fear that jealous people in the churches could derail their plans using witchcraft. Some people give money to signify their gratitude for the “visa breakthroughs.” The pastor/prophet leads these special prayers, either publicly or privately. A private counselling session and the granting of special spiritual directions (*akwankyerε*) for the journey can follow the prayer. The Holy Spirit reveals these directions to the pastor/prophet. The directives consist of the dos and don’ts that guarantee the journey’s success. Prospective travellers demonstrate care in choosing ritual specialists, preferring to work with ritualists they know well—someone with demonstrated capacity to perform efficacious rituals, and one who they trust, to make the details of the journey confidential. Often, my informants indicated that they had established relationships with the experts during the decision or preparation for travel visas or documentation phase and had built trust well enough to entrust successful performance of the ritual into his/her care. Some ritual experts give travellers ritual directions over the phone. The number of days left for the journey, the nature of the journey, the relationship the traveller has with the pastors, and the status of the traveller are factors ritual experts consider in deciding to use phone calls. The ritual experts pray and prophesy for the individual via phone call, or at prayer centres or at churches’ offices. The pastors/prophets may also visit the individuals' in their homes to provide counselling and spiritual support for the journey.

Andoh, a 33-year-old student at the University of Western Sydney and a member of the CoPS shared with me his experience with pre-departure rituals. He said he went to the Church (CoP) in the Enchi district in Tarkwa (Western region, Ghana) to make a thanksgiving financial offertory and request for special anointing with oil and prayers for a safe journey prior to his departure to Australia. Andoh sought the rituals after receiving a student visa to enable his study on full scholarship at an Australian university in the year 2011. He explained

⁴³⁹ Jan-Bart. Gewald, Sabine. Luning, Klaas Van Walraven, and Ebrary, Inc., ed. *The Speed of Change Motor Vehicles and People in Africa, 1890-2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 219.

that seeking “travel mercies” for the journey at the Church was because the pastor was helpful to him during his preparation for the visa interview: “the pastor provided special prayer and counselling during his (my) decision to travel and pursue education abroad and when he applied for the travel visa.”⁴⁴⁰ According to Andoh and some of my respondents, the success of their visa applications boosted their commitment to the prophets and the Churches.

Convinced that the Church’s rituals were indeed efficacious, worshippers continued to engage its MR ritual practice prior to the start of their journeys: “receiving the visas increased my (our) confidence in the prayers.”⁴⁴¹ Mr Andoh’s acts also demonstrate the importance prospective travellers placed in the blessings from the Church for the journey. The blessings constitute “a spiritual travel permit,” that could equal or exceed the value of the official travel visas for the journeys.⁴⁴² They highly esteem the “spiritual permit” and consider it crucial in the period prior to departure. For them, the “spiritual permit” enabled the smooth and successful journey.

Furthermore, as an endorsement of the permission to enter another country, by bringing the visa into a church building, travel visa acquires new meanings. The participation of the visa in the pre-departure rituals guarantees the opening of the supernatural door to opportunities abroad. No wonder Mr. Andoh felt obliged to go back to the Church to show appreciation to God for His faithfulness, after receiving his travel visa.⁴⁴³ Andoh concluded that God fulfilled His part of a covenant agreement and so it was his turn to appreciate God. In that respect, the meanings assigned to visas play important roles in how the migrants frame the receipt of the visa and departure—as a sign of God fulfilling His covenantal obligations. It also meant “a divine endorsement” of the journey. According to Kusi-Boateng, “acquiring the visa was an indication that ‘the travel breakthrough door’ had been opened for the journey; the immigration officials are simply instruments God uses to open the door.”⁴⁴⁴ The point here is that in the Pentecostal MR ritual praxis, the mundane process of acquiring

⁴⁴⁰ Personal communication with Andoh a member of the CoPS on 31/02/2014.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Jacqueline Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope, and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁴⁴³ Personal communication with Mr Andoh on 31/02/2014.

⁴⁴⁴ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng at the PCK on 06/03/2014.

travel visas is attributed to divine manipulation of human agents (immigration officials) in fulfilment of a spiritual covenant between an individual and God.

My interviews revealed that the prospective migrants identify specific ritual experts as crucial to consult, prior to their departure from Ghana and even when leaving Australia to another country for education or business, if their journeys should be successful. Kusi-Boateng is one such expert. Among the migrants who travelled from Australia to see Kusi-Boateng for special prayers for good business connections and opportunities in Australia and elsewhere overseas during the 2014 "Signs and Tokens" Conference at the PCK, were those whom he had prayed with them, or prophesied concerning their migration to Australia. Others explained that they attended the conference because they were preparing to establish businesses or apply for transfers to different states or countries or were getting ready to fly out of Australia for business, education, work, and visits in other countries. They travelled to see the prophet and requested special rituals for the success of the journey. Johnson was travelling from Australia to Canada to join his brother in business the following week but needed "the touch of Papa" (Kusi-Boateng) before he journeyed. He said, "You cannot leave without Papa's covering and anointing... When you have his 'anointed touch,' the journey goes well... I have been here before. That was when I was travelling to the U.K. and I know that I succeeded in the journey and in the business which took me to the U.K., because of his 'touch of grace for safe and successful journeys.'"⁴⁴⁵ Johnson had built trust in Kusi-Boateng's spiritual endowment to the extent that he believed his journey to Canada would be successful if he could obtain Kusi-Boateng's spiritual covering and anointing. Anointing in the neo-prophetic churches is the single most important channel for mediating divine power and resources.⁴⁴⁶ The belief in the PCK is that, anointing endows members with power and spiritual resources to achieve their desires such as success in their journeys abroad.⁴⁴⁷

Invariably, the ritual services that these ritual experts provide in the pre-migration rituals underlies the reason members' continue to rely on their ritual services for the journey. Renowned travel ritual specialists such as Kusi-Boateng project themselves as people with

⁴⁴⁵ Telephone communication with Johnson on 30/07/2014. The personal assistant to Kusi-Boateng gave me Johnson's contact for the interview.

⁴⁴⁶ Omenyo and Arthur, 62.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

great spiritual power “capable of performing extraordinary feats for members.”⁴⁴⁸ They are also regarded as the ones who see into the future and the dimensions of people’s present predicaments.⁴⁴⁹ These features encouraged many interviewees like Johnson to seek Kusi-Boateng for rituals while preparing for his departure to Canada and then later to Australia. He described Kusi-Boateng as “the prophet who sees.” The search for ritual services of the prophets is typical of Ghanaian Pentecostals.⁴⁵⁰ For them, nothing happens by accident, whether good or bad. There is always a supernatural enablement at some point. Consequently, besides, the physical precautionary measures they take, they seek to know, be in control, and obviate the supernatural dimension of their situations including migration.⁴⁵¹ As a result, there is the tendency to engage ritual experts to access foreknowledge about or prevent any undesirable outcome of the migration before departure.

Johnson described how, he went to see the prophet in his office and informed him about the receipt of the visa and his anticipated journey. He said Kusi-Boateng lifted up anointing oil that he (Johnson) went with, and asked Johnson to kneel down on the floor. Kusi-Boateng then declared, “May you be carried on the wings of the eagle as you journey, may you succeed and excel on your way in and on your way out, in Jesus name.”⁴⁵² Moffat also shared with me how many people go to see Kusi-Boateng so that he will “anoint them or just prophesy into their journeys before their departure from Ghana.” Others called on the phone or sent in emails. Moffat shared his story, “Anytime I am travelling overseas for a short or long stay, first, I inform ‘Papa’ for him to see in the realm of the spirit, if ‘the road is all clear’ before I even buy my ticket.”⁴⁵³ Johnson and Moffat relied on the ritual prowess of the prophet to enable the success of their journeys. Kusi-Boateng’s “spiritual covering and anointing” provide luck (*etire nkwa*) that increases their chances of “being deemed worthy” of entering the destinations safely and successfully. For many of these Ghanaian migrants, achieving success in their journeys to Australia required spiritual cover and anointing. The belief is that the ritual experts deal with anticipated mishaps in the course of the journeys

⁴⁴⁸ Cephas N. Omenyo, “Man of God Prophesy Unto Me: The Prophetic Phenomenon in African Christianity,” *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 1 (2011): 41.

⁴⁴⁹ Omenyo and Atiemo, 66.

⁴⁵⁰ Omenyo.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

⁴⁵² Telephone communication with Johnson on 30/07/2014.

⁴⁵³ Telephone with Moffat on 16/10/2015.

from the spiritual realm and through rituals, before the actual journey. Descriptions of personal prayers prior to their departures were also typical in the narrations of their journeys. Describing the intensity of her prayers, Adwoa (an Account clerk in Sydney), said, "We prayed in Church as if we would never go back. This was because we heard stories in the Church of how many people either died on the way or were deported or had to divert their journeys or never made it to their destinations, or are missing."⁴⁵⁴ The fear of death and of the unknown during the journeys largely informed the fervent prayers of members such as Adwoa.

In addition to seeking special anointing and personal prayers, prospective migrants also bought and used ritual paraphernalia to avert the dangers they anticipated would accompany their journeys. I met James at the PPC (Paradise Prayer Centre) on 31st January 2014. He told me about his impending journey to Sweden only after knowing that I was living and studying in New Zealand. He also had to seek permission from Prophet Owusu to talk to me.⁴⁵⁵ He had come to the Centre to purchase ritual items. The items included *Nyame Ehyiraso* (blessed by God). *Nyame Ehyiraso* is an Akan word for the pounded bark of *Nyame Dua* (God's tree) also called *sinuro*. The Akan people believe that the *Onyame dua* (*Alstonia Boonei*, or the tree of God), has mystical powers.⁴⁵⁶ They often plant it in palaces, shrines, and houses to repel the evil forces. Clients who patronize the Pentecostal prayer centres such as the PPC buy and apply *Nyame Ehyiraso* on their bodies as a protective and curative substance because it is spiritually potent.⁴⁵⁷ It is believed that *Nyame Dua* has powers to apprehend witches and wizards who attempt to harm users.⁴⁵⁸ In other words, obviate spiritual barriers. James also bought anointed handkerchief and a T-shirt, repositories of spiritual power and symbols of victory, respectively. He told me the prophet asked him to buy these items after he (James) had received his visa to travel to Holland. James said the

⁴⁵⁴ Personal communication with Adwoa a member at the PCM on 24/07/2014.

⁴⁵⁵ James said he would not have told me about the journey if I had not obtained permission from the Prophet to speak with him. This is because at the centre, they tell them to be quiet about their travel ventures, "because you do not know who you are talking to, the person could be an agent of the devil, who has been assigned to destroy the journey."

⁴⁵⁶ De-Valera N.Y.M. Botchway, and Awo Abena Amoah Sarpong, "Indigenous Work Ethics among Akan of Ghana," *Religions* 1, no. 14 (2015); Kofi Asare Opoku, "African Spirituality: On Becoming Ancestors (Book Review)," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66, no. 4 (1998).

⁴⁵⁷ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "The Prophetic Functionality of *Nyame Ahyiraso* in Pentecostal Prayer Centres in Ghana," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 16, no. 3 (2011): 196.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

prophet cautioned him of a vision in which he saw spirits attacking him as he departed Ghana. The spirits gave him stroke and caused him to be deported. To forestall this disaster, the prophet directed James to buy the potent “blessed herbs.” James said the prophet cautioned him to either chew the herb, drink a concoction, or smear portions of it on his body a day before he departed from Ghana. James said the prophet also gave him the date on which he must depart for Holland. James also had to wear the T-Shirt beneath his clothes on the day he boarded the plane. The prophet directed him not to take off the shirt until he arrived at Holland. James’ story underscores the importance of ritual items and the directives of ritual specialists as to how they must use these items to avert disaster during the Journey to the West. Dates for the departure are even determined through prophecies before. The traveller must strictly comply with this date. Consequently, prophecy and sale of ritual items continue to feature in the transit-phase of MR. They are to unleash spiritual powers to facilitate smooth departure, with no hassles with immigration or custom officials and smooth plane take-off from Ghana.

For the members of the Churches who journeyed to Australia without any or proper legal documentation, the need for rituals to anchor their pre-departure stages was just as imperative as it was for the legal migrants, if not much more. Some admitted that in addition to the rituals they received before their departure at the Churches and the prayer centres, they visited Ghanaian traditional ritual experts on their own volition, but surreptitiously. Looking back, my interviewees said, they engaged the services of such experts because they were very young in the Christian faith. Others shared that their relatives took them to traditional priests (Akomfo), shrines, marabouts or to other Pentecostal traditions for fortification, “travel blessings,” and protection prior their departure. According to Kusi-Boateng, “travel blessings” are the enabling (anointed) opportunities and advantages that should accompany one’s travel endeavours. Acheampong, a Ghanaian migrant with a refugee status in Sydney, explained, “The traditional ritual experts are able to see what would prevail in the course of the journey and can warn you of the dangers ahead. They know the day you must set off, even what and when to eat on the way.”⁴⁵⁹ Esuon, who lives in Canberra, but worships at the CoPS occasionally, journeyed as a stowaway on a container ship departing Ghana for Europe. He later travelled to Australia under refugee status. He told me about how

⁴⁵⁹ Telephone communication with Acheampong a member of the CoPS on 12/11/2015.

he and his brothers sought spiritual support and safety at the Kweku Fri traditional shrine at Nwoase in the Wenchi District of the Brong-Ahafo region, before departing from Ghana. The shrine is popular and known to have fortified many Ghanaians and people from the neighbouring West African nations such as Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and Togo in their journeys abroad.⁴⁶⁰

Esoun also added that he and his brothers were hesitant to go to the shrine because of their CoP background but believed that the only way to travel safely and successfully on such a horrific voyage was to deploy all relevant spiritual resources to enable the success of their journeys to Europe and later to Australia in 2002:

I am first Akan before a Christian.... I had to be sure about my fate in the journey to Italy in 1992 through my tradition.... After all, I was born into a family that belongs to the tradition. Besides, during annual festivals when my extended family pours libation to ask for blessings, protection for the family and celebrate our ancestry, they mention the names of every member of the family, so I am one way or the other connected.⁴⁶¹

Esoun accessed the resources of a Ghanaian indigenous shrine in addition to visiting the CoP's prayer centre as a precaution, to gain an extra advantage, and for protection in his journey. He considered Ghanaian traditional cosmic forces crucial for the success of his voyage. The reliance of migrant members on traditional religious agents was a matter of concern to the Chairman of the CoP in Ghana. He lamented, "Our people still believe in certain traditional practices, especially in times of crises and it is difficult to remove such a mentality, even after years of being in the Church."⁴⁶² Onyinah's concern underscores the pervasive influence of traditional beliefs and practices among members of the Pentecostal tradition such as Esoun. The stories also provide a window into what Daswani refers to "as the Christian rupture with the past."⁴⁶³ Daswani has shown that such rupture "is subject to personal struggles and interpersonal disputes."⁴⁶⁴ The CoP and PCK institutions promote a radical rupture with the traditional religious past and an un-Christian present. However, Esoun's story and the stories of other migrant members of the CoP and PCK Churches in

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Telephone communication with Eric Esoun, (a 61 years electrical engineer and a member of the CoPS) on 16/08/2014.

⁴⁶² Personal communication with Opoku Onyinah, on 22/01/2014.

⁴⁶³ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

Australia and Ghana, indicate an interest in a continued practice of the traditional religious rituals as the members prepared for their departures.⁴⁶⁵ The stories show how prospective migrants link and appropriate different forms of MRs; such as the Ghanaian traditional form of MR and the Pentecostal form of MR. These forms both build on Ghanaian understandings that attribute misfortunes to evil causes and view travel as an avenue that attracts forces of misfortune. The difference is that while the Pentecostal MR views travel as divine right of the faithful, the ATR's MR attributes international travel to individual's venture and right. The appropriation of the different forms of MR is not an indication of a doubt in the efficacy of the rituals of the other, but complementation of the other.

The migrants found the meaning of their departure from Ghana through belief and practice that transcended religious affiliation and boundaries. Acheampong and Esuon's stories demonstrate the porous boundaries between Pentecostal and indigenous traditions and cultural practices, and the dynamic nature of their intersection for Ghanaian travellers. Religious adaptability or syncretism is apparently common in preparation for journeys; it is a norm, rather than the exception, among migrants of various faiths.⁴⁶⁶ The evidence from my informants confirms that these Ghanaian migrants also use more than one religious tradition prior to the departure. After the pre-departure ritual preparations and the date for the "take-off" (departure) have been determined and confirmed, the prospective migrants then embark on the journey.

5.2.1b The "Take-off" stage and the Journey to Australia

The "take-off stage" is the period between when the plane or other forms of transportation take-off or depart from Ghana, and the arrival in the host destination. The actual journey takes place in the period. It is where the individual traveller relies heavily on the rituals performed at the churches, at the prayer centres or even in their homes prior to the journey to enable the smooth flow of the journey. It is a stage where individuals also enact the rituals and use the counselling they had gone through prior to their departure. The ritual experts are not physically present at this time.⁴⁶⁷ However, members enact the spiritual instructions and

⁴⁶⁵ Meyer, "Translating the Devil, an African Appropriation of Pietist Protestantism: The Case of the Peki Ewe in Southern Ghana, 1847-1992."

⁴⁶⁶ Peggy Levitt, *God Needs No Passport : Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape* (New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 109.

⁴⁶⁷ Trusted families and friends also take on ritual tasks mostly by praying or seeking special prayers at the Churches for the safety of the traveller.

directives (*akwankyerε*) the ritual experts provided them, before their departure and on the way. Some of the student migrants I spoke to at the PCM described how Kusi-Boateng had asked them to abstain from food and drinks at the departure from Ghana to arrival, and break the fast at specific points in the journey. Others said they used items such as anointed oils, water, handkerchiefs, bracelets, and salt during or before the take-off. They explained that they took the items to Kusi-Boateng to pray and anoint them in order to ritually charge or imbibe the items with supernatural powers to enable smooth journey. They used the items depending on the mode of transportation and spiritual instructions they received. In situations where they anticipated particular dangers and were apprehensive, they said, the ritual items they had on them, offered a sense of safety. Still, others said they confessed prophetic statements that had been made by prophets, repeatedly, during the journey.

Kwesi, who is a mining engineer residing in Perth but occasionally visits the PCM expressed how he had anointed himself with the oil that Kusi-Boateng had prayed over before boarding the plane and kept confessing the prophecies for his safety and success throughout the journey (while on the plane to Australia). Newton, who is an electrician and a member of the PCM shared that in addition to his family's prayer support and encouragement, he called the PCM's prayer line and requested prayer for "special grace" immediately he sat in the plane from Woodbury to Melbourne.⁴⁶⁸ Newton concluded that through Kusi-Boateng's prophecies, he (Newton) journeyed successfully to settle in Melbourne.

Kwesi's and Newton's cases demonstrate that there is a continuous connection between the agents of MR and their migrant clients throughout their journeys from the homeland to the host land. Also, the prophets/pastors and church members at home provide "spiritual-backing," while the individual journeys.⁴⁶⁹ Kusi-Boateng would mention names of members travelling at the prayer meetings in Kumasi and ask the Church to offer special prayers supporting them. Some prophets would expect to receive updates on how the journey was proceeding so that they can provide further "spiritual backing." Abena shared that she had to call prophet Owusu to give updates on how the journey was proceeding when she was in transit in Italy, on her way to the U.S.A. As she travelled from the U.S.A. to

⁴⁶⁸ "Special grace" is a term among these Pentecostals that refers to a supernatural enabling power.

⁴⁶⁹ "Spiritual backing" according to Kwesi is a divine or supernatural support.

Australia, she made another call. The prophet and the prayer team were anxiously awaiting these calls and they would start a session of prayers each time she would call. From Abena's expression, one could see how she felt confident, comfortable, and at peace on all those journeys knowing that she had a team of "prayer warriors" and the prophet "waging war against the forces that could 'fight the success' of my (her) journeys."⁴⁷⁰ She attributed the safety, success, and smoothness of her journeys to the "spiritual warfare" that took place at home for her. For Abena, the "warfare prayers" made the journeys safe and successful.

Some members talked about some traditional ritual items that they believed were helpful during their journeys. Kofi Appiah, a 47-year-old health assistant and a member of the CoPS, talked about the importance of the traditional ritual items he used in the course of his journeys. He said that a talisman he got from a shrine for his journey warned of any impending danger and protected him. The talisman would tighten on his waist whenever there was an impending danger. The talisman was to protect them from witchcraft attacks that could derail the journey as well. He said foxes and snakes could attack travellers during the long trek. These were only guises that witches took to attack them. He attributed his successful crossing to his talisman's protection. Komla, a 37-year-old barber and a member of the CoPS also intimated that he was part of a stowaway group that joined a container ship from Takoradi (Western Region of Ghana) to Western Europe. He revealed that at a point during the journey, the ship capsized and some people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea: "If it had not been for the talisman around my wrist to protect me, perhaps I would have been drowned too."⁴⁷¹ The Italian coast guards found and saved him and others who were swimming towards the coast. He attributed his safety to the ritual object he was carrying, even though he said he would not take such a risky journey today.

Komla's action was informed by the local Ghanaian understandings that the "travel task was dangerous and only meant for the strong hearted and headed," hence the need for extra protection from the traditional sources or spiritual fortification.⁴⁷² Komla and Esuon's stories show their efforts in ensuring the success of the journeys. The stories paint a grim picture of the reality of migration especially across the Saharah Desert and Mediterranean Sea. The stories also demonstrate the fear, desperation, dilemmas, and uncertainties that

⁴⁷⁰ Personal communication with Abena at the PCM on 18/07/2014.

⁴⁷¹ Telephone communication with Komla, a member of the PCM on 18/07/2015.

⁴⁷² Telephone communication with Komla on 18/07/2015.

these prospective migrants face. Stories like that of the 471 Ghanaians and 32 unaccompanied minors who were rescued from boats in the Mediterranean Sea by Italian authorities between January and April 2015 drive home the harsh realities of international migration that fuel the fears of prospective migrants.⁴⁷³ From the stories of my respondents, it would seem that experiences in the journey determine the continuity of MR rituals in the journey, and upon arrival in the destination points.

5.2.1c Arrival in *Eldorado* (Australia)

The arrival stage of the MR's transit-phase begins when the migrant "touches-down" or arrives at the temporal or permanent overseas nation. A mixture of celebrations and anxiety mark this stage both in the homeland and host land. The individual sends updates through phone calls, instant messages or photos reporting his/her arrival. Depending on the situation upon arrival, the individual migrant requests for ritual items, more prayers, spiritual directives, and keeps in touch with the home Churches or particular prophets/pastors of the Churches and other faiths who contributed to the success of the journey. It is also a stage where migrants redeem their pledges or promises to God, their home church or particular ritual expert who played crucial roles in the process of the journey. According to my interviewees, depending on the number of ritual experts who contributed to the success of the journey, migrants' arrival status as either refugee, unemployed or student, and the conditions upon arrival, the migrants would redeem their pledges either immediately, or over a period.

Family members of the migrants may also give "thanksgiving offertory" (special offering) or pay pledges on behalf of the migrants to the churches in exchange for safe travels, or safe passage and protection. Many also shared that they redeemed their pledges by sending an initial and occasional remittances to the churches or to the ritual experts in the form of "special money offered to thank God, the church, and the ritual experts for the roles they played in the success of the migration process."⁴⁷⁴ Some redeemed their pledges by

⁴⁷³ Starrfmonline, "471 Ghanaian Migrants Rescued from Mediterranean Sea," in *General News*, ed. Starrfmonline (Ghanaweb, 2015); BBC, "Migrants Killed in 'Religious Clash' on Mediterranean Boat," in *News, Europe*, ed. BBC (BBC, 2015); *ibid.* Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, "Why Visa Rejection Do Not Halt Nigerian Migrants," BBC. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33073000?SThisFB&fb_ref=Default. (Accessed 17/06/2015).

⁴⁷⁴ Telephone communication with Komla, a member of the PCM, on 18/07/2015.

paying for the purchase of musical instruments, building materials, vehicles or designer suits for the ritual experts.

Others migrants also redeemed their pledges by sending their monthly or annual tithes to the Church or ritual experts. Jacqueline Hagan refers to these exchanges as the “pledges of reciprocity” (*la promesa*).⁴⁷⁵ The making and redeeming of pledges creates continuity in terms of MR, in part, by perpetuating the link between ritual experts and their migrant clientele. The *la promesa* here has economic benefits for the Churches in the homeland, as migrants provides financial and material goods to the Churches. The point here is that in the context of fulfilling their pledges for MR ritual, migrants provide remittances to the Churches. As a result, MR produces economic benefits for the home Churches. The *la promesa* also ensures a continuity of both physical and spiritual connection between the Church and the migrant. Moffat shared that “the Church has a record of members who redeemed their pledges and keeps in touch with them via the social media, emails, and calls. We pray for them, and sometimes when Kusi-Boateng travels just to help these members pay critical debts such as fees and medical bills.” According to Newton, he and other migrants made phone calls to request for various forms of rituals as they prepared for resident permits, extension of travel visas, immigration related court cases, or police cases in relation to deportation, or filing for spouses or family members to join them. The point is the degree to which MR is maintained upon migrants’ arrival, depends on various factors, such as the connection between the migrant and ritual experts, personal convictions, or individuals’ experiences upon arrival.

Adwoa shared that when she “landed” in Australia, among the first things she did was to call home and ask her family to give a “thanksgiving offertory” at the CoP in Ghana on her behalf. Kwesi also described what motivated him to continue to connect with PCK’s ritual practices upon arrival in Australia. He said Kusi-Boateng prophesied to him (Kwesi), before he travelled, concerning whom he would meet on his journey and upon arrival, and the events that would unfold. He said, as a result, he “felt obliged, upon his arrival, to redeem his pledge

⁴⁷⁵ Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope, and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey*; Sarah J. Mahler, “Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey,” *Social Forces* 88, no. 4 (2010): 1933-934. 88, no. 4 (2010); Rene Manenti, Rosenbaum, Emily, Gilbertson, Greta, and Weinshenker, Matthew, “Migration and Borders: The “Casas Del Migrante” and the Flow of Unauthorized Migrants” (Dissertation, Fordham University, 2013). The *la promesa* is a private agreement between the traveller and a sacred being or object or image, or religious tradition, or spiritual leader.

and continue to seek spiritual help in matters concerning his stay in Australia from Kusi-Boateng and the PCK.”⁴⁷⁶ Apart from contacting their ritual experts in the homeland, the migrants made efforts to initiate prayer Cells in their new homes, when their numbers began to grow community in Australia.

From the stories, migrants continued MR upon their arrival in Australia, in the form of multiple religious activities, which formed the basis for the migrants’ extension of the local Ghanaian Pentecostal MR practices to the global stage in Australia. The activities included creating worshipping Cells, keeping in touch with the Churches back home, and joining already-existing Ghanaian Pentecostal churches that provide among other things, the space, ritual resources, and facilities for continuing MR in the host land.

The stories in this section show that migrants engaged in MR rituals throughout the stages of their journeys. Some migrants deployed MR rituals throughout the journey; others engaged the rituals at some point in the journey. Nevertheless, the stories show that the migrant members of the Churches relied heavily on MR rituals as cultural devices for enabling their migration process, to shape their moods by intensifying migrants’ joy and confront challenges, especially those they attributed to the domain of evil forces.⁴⁷⁷ The section shows an active participation of both the churches and the travellers in the migration process. More importantly, the migrants actively carried on with their MR upon immediate arrival in Australia. More so, members viewed the rituals not just representing them, but as facilitating elements in the journey. The section is rather shorter because at this stage, members began to initiate activities that encourage the creation of worshipping Cells, the focus of my next two Chapters. The following section discusses my findings on the migrants’ MR narratives during the transit-phase of the migration process.

5.2.2 The Transit-Phase and MR Narratives

Apart from the rituals, narratives in the form of oral stories, which worshippers created from contextualizing, contesting, or rendition of the Churches’ teachings and practices, also played out in the journey. The narratives were the meaning-making mechanisms that lay migrant worshippers of the Churches deployed in understanding their experiences during the journey and the ritual practices they engaged in. I have compiled the oral stories from my

⁴⁷⁶ Personal communication with Kwesi at the PCM on 28/07/2014.

⁴⁷⁷ Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 70-71.

interviewees as composite narratives in order to interpret and give structural understanding of the individual stories. I view the narratives as retrospective, because they are the perspectives of migrant members of the Churches, who are now in Australia, about how they understood their journeys and experiences in the migration process.

The narratives provide inspiration, consolation, hope in times of crises, and guidelines. Scholars present such narratives as meaning-making devices for the journey.⁴⁷⁸ For example, Maitè Maskens notes that some “African Pentecostals have a theology of travel in which the entire journey is understood to follow a divine pattern.”⁴⁷⁹ I view the narratives here not only as representations and explanations of the realities in the journeys the migrants undertook, but also as contributing to producing and shaping those realities.⁴⁸⁰

5.2.2a Journey to Australia as “Spiritual and Mundane”

An important narrative of travel in both Churches was that international migration is not only a mundane activity but also a process requiring spiritual effort. This understanding influenced how prospective migrants prepared for the journey after they received their visas. Kusi-Boateng emphasized this point when he said, “Such journeys are meant for spiritually robust men and women who understand its physical and spiritual dimensions... They are not for the weakling.”⁴⁸¹ He was alluding to the perilous nature of international migrations and the need for the traveller to be adequately prepared, both physically and spiritually.

At the Churches, worshippers shared the understanding that journeying from Ghana to Australia was an arduous physical task that they had to tackle spiritually as well. At one time, Owiredu, a student nurse in Melbourne emphasized how “success in such journeys could only be achieved by the strong, determined, and praying ‘men.’”⁴⁸² The point is they consider the journey as perilous and unpredictable. Owiredu’s language is somewhat gendered, because it favours male characteristics as the requisite for overseas journeys. It illustrates a perception that overseas migration is male-dominated. His view neglects women’s migration to Australia. However, women have participated actively in these

⁴⁷⁸ Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope, and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey*, 116-17.

⁴⁷⁹ Maskens Maitè, “Mobility among Pentecostal Pastors and Migratory “Miracles”,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 46, no. 3: 406.

⁴⁸⁰ Miriam Cihodariu, “Narratives as Instrumental Research and as Attempts of Fixing Meaning. The Uses and Misuses of the Concept of Narratives,” *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology* 3, no. 2 (2012).

⁴⁸¹ Personal communication with Owiredu a member at the PCM on 24/04/2015. Owiredu said Kusi-Boateng told him this during a counselling session when he was leaving Ghana for Australia.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

migrations. According to the latest (2011) records from the Australian Bureau of statistics, there are 2047 male (53%) and 1818 female (47%) distribution of Ghanaian migrants in Australia.⁴⁸³ The sex ratio then is 112.6 males per 100 females.⁴⁸⁴ The gender distribution of my respondents reflects that male-female balance. In total, I spoke to 17 men and 13 women in both Churches. In addition, I observed in both Churches, the presence of more women than men, an indication of the active participation of women in the migration process. Nevertheless, Owiredu was only emphasizing how arduous it is when undertaking such journeys. Indeed, the “strength” motif is masculinized and seems to involve valourizing of migration/migrants.⁴⁸⁵

Similarly, Esien who is a 34-year-old truck driver in Melbourne and a drummer at the PCK, told me how he thought that the journey to overseas was only for a few daring people who were prepared physically and mentally to venture into unknown territories. He added that, “There is also something spiritual about travelling to another land. It is not only a physical thing needing strength... You are venturing into the physical and spiritual spaces of Australia... For you to succeed in the journey, you are to prepare for both spaces.”⁴⁸⁶ These respondents also shared with me how these perceptions of such travels pushed them to prepare spiritually before they journeyed.

In addition, a widely held view in both Churches that “‘events that manifest in the mundane world are first decided in the spirit world,’ motivated their ritual preparations.”⁴⁸⁷ Prophet Owusu stated that at the PPC, worshippers believe that “everything physical is created in the ‘realm of the spirit’ before materializing into the physical.” The outcome of the journeys was determined in the spiritual realm, even before the traveller embarked on it.⁴⁸⁸ Ogbu Kalu has also stated that the “Ghanaian indigenous and Pentecostal traditions affirm that ‘events that manifest in the world are first decided in the spirit world.’”⁴⁸⁹ My respondents explained how confident they had been that their journeys would end

⁴⁸³ Mena.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 9-13.

⁴⁸⁶ Personal communication with Esien at CoPS on 06/07/2014.

⁴⁸⁷ Personal communication with Pastor Owusu at the CoPS.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Kalu, 179.

successfully because they had already secured this success spiritually through the rituals they practiced in preparation for the journey.

The influence of witchcraft narrative played out in the extra care, which prospective migrants took to conceal their travel plans after they received their travel visas. The witchcraft narrative cautioned against revealing travel plans before departing Ghana. They had to take care concerning whom to share news about the journey with, when, and how. Persons, who openly discussed their success with the visa process, where they would be going to, what they would be doing, and other details, risked attracting the attention of witches, evil doers, and forces that were ready to sabotage the journey.⁴⁹⁰ "You must keep such information to yourself until you reach the destination, because not everyone is happy for you. Some people would kill to be in your shoes. You would give valuable information to your enemies or even witches and wizards to terminate the journey."⁴⁹¹ Newton shared a story of a member of the PCK who failed to keep secret her journey, to buttress his point. "Benson, who was one of our members in Ghana, was arrested at Dubai for carrying cocaine in his luggage. Narrating his story after his arrest, he insisted that he did not carry the drug in his luggage. He had only informed a friend who even assisted him to pay for his flight ticket." Newton added that, "the day before his flight, Benson travelled from Kumasi to Accra in order to stay with his friend, who even took him to the Accra-Kotoka international airport... When news reached the Church of his arrest in Dubai, we knew it was the hand of the enemy at work... We knew Benson as a hardworking and law abiding individual... The Church prayed, and the revelation was that the friend was an agent of the devil who wanted to destroy Benson's travel aspirations."⁴⁹² Newton's point is that Benson's arrest was a spiritual manipulation to sabotage his journey and his negligence for informing "the enemy." The narrative implies a spiritual contestation in the travel process. The narrative emphasizes the need to be secretive about the journey itself.

Similarly, Esien shared his experience, "When I was leaving Ghana and while on the journey, I did not tell people where I was headed for fear of evil forces, jealous friends, and relatives... After getting my travel visa, it was only my wife and my pastor who knew about

⁴⁹⁰ Personal communication with Newton at the PCM on 12/07/2014.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

the journey."⁴⁹³ According to Esien, they had to keep secret the news about their journeys. Only the ritual experts, prayerful relatives, and trusted friends must know. One needs to wait until he or she got to the destination. Keeping the journey or one's destination secret and away from malevolent spiritual forces, guaranteed the success of the journey. In Esien's opinion, malevolent spirits are the main obstacles to successful journey. From the various stories on witchcraft in this section, there is a continuity of the grassroots narrative on witchcraft in Chapter Four. However, what is different here is that the Church leaders also propagate the same narrative for migrants during the journey. This implies that the grassroots narrative on witchcraft corresponds with Church's own narrative.

5.2.2b Journey to Australia as "Victory in a Spiritual Warfare"

Related to the witchcraft narrative is a narrative that understands the journey to the Australia as a time of intense spiritual warfare in which the traveller must battle with the agents of supernatural harm seeking to derail the journey. Elaborating on the narrative, Prophet Owusu explained, "out of disregard for the things of the spirit during such the journeys, people collect 'so called' parcels from strangers, friends, and family or even church members either from home or during the journey, to be delivered to other migrants" in the destination.⁴⁹⁴ Prophet Owusu added that many of the parcels are not intended for any one, but to spiritually destroy the purpose of the journeys for individuals.⁴⁹⁵

According to the narrative, the successful ending of the journey marks the victory of the traveller in the war. It is in the light of this narrative that the prophets/pastors of the Churches advise the travellers not to accept items from strangers prior to their departure or during their journeys. The items may contain evil powers intended to harm the traveller or disrupt the smooth flow of the journey. An interviewee explained, "The reason is that some people had lost their anointing for 'divine speed and access' to opportunities God had in store for them on the way and in the land they would sojourn by collecting items from malevolent agents (people)."⁴⁹⁶ Others had ended up in jail on their journey abroad, "by unknowingly allowing 'demonic agents' to plant illegal substances in their luggage."⁴⁹⁷ The narrative provides the rationale for the rituals many travellers practiced as part of the pre-

⁴⁹³ Personal communication with Esien at the PCM on 16/05/2014.

⁴⁹⁴ Telephone communication with Prophet Owusu on 18/11/2015.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Telephone communication with Kusi-Boateng on 11/10/2015.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

departure precautionary measures. The narrative also shows how the ritual experts play key roles in the journey itself, just as they did before the journey. Their statements are important signposts for items migrants carry along the journey itself. The narrative here follows the perspectives of the leaders of the Churches. Prophet Owusu and others present travel-centred narrative from the leadership level. The point here is that in the journey, there is a corresponding interplay between narratives of the laity and the leaders of the Churches.

Dinah, a female member of PCK, described how she became a victim of the spiritual battle during her journey abroad to Australia. She mentioned that as a student in Ghana, she had dreams of travelling overseas to continue her education. When an organization promised her a summer-work /study abroad program in the U.K., she readily accepted the offer. Unbeknownst to her, they lured her into a prostitution scheme. She narrated her ordeal:

It was not until during the journey that we realized that we had been sold into prostitution! I only left the U.K. for Australia recently in the year 2009. However, it was because God gave me victory by making me gain an admission into a university to study nursing... I know that God wanted me to come here... but the devil tried to destroy me, by opening an 'evil door' that landed me in prostitution... My pastor in Ghana explained my experience and said; through prayers, the church waged war for me during those times... He said that just like Joseph in the scripture, who was sold into slavery, I was also sold into prostitution via demonic orchestrations... Nevertheless, God gave me victory over the ploy of the enemy.⁴⁹⁸

Dinah's journey to study abroad ended with her working in a brothel. She interpreted her predicament in terms of the narrative on evil forces waging war on travellers. It was a demonic attack intended to destroy her journey. She was a casualty of the war. Nevertheless, because the pastor knew the spiritual cause of her experience, he led the Church in waging war against the spiritual forces fighting to derail her journey. In Dinah's case, the narrative offered the meaning-making framework for her understanding of what happened.

Like Dinah, interviewees whose journeys involved having to cross the Sahara desert or the sea at one point or the other during their journeys from Ghana emphasized the horrific circumstances of these crossings. They viewed their ordeals as part of the spiritual warfare. They described their successes as victories over Satan or death and the enemies of progress.⁴⁹⁹ Many of them said the ability to overcome these ordeals by prayers, brought home to them, a new understanding of the importance of one's faith as a migrant. These

⁴⁹⁸ Personal communication with Dinah, a member at the CoPS on 4/06/2015.

⁴⁹⁹ The tone of warfare is typical feature of the Pentecostals.

migrants talked about how deepened their religious convictions and participation became, through these travel experiences, and how they victoriously arrived in Australia poised to continue the “spiritual warfare” in the context of the prayer fellowships many of them initiated. The understanding here is that, the nature of the journey itself motivates religious participation and conviction. The section has demonstrated a form of composite narrative in the cases my respondents presented, one of a battle between good and evil.

5.2.2c Journey to Australia as “the manifestation of a ‘Divine Plan’”

Migrants also described experiences in the journey as the manifestation of a divine plan. Influenced largely by a genre of the Churches’ teaching, prayer, and song themes, prior to their journeys, some of the interviewees expressed that their journeys to Australia was divinely orchestrated and was part of a “divine scheme.” The journeys followed a “divine pattern.”⁵⁰⁰ The nature and experiences of the journey were part of the divine scheme and essential for their preparations for God’s purpose for them in Australia. Many of these interviewees said they did not feel defeated by these experiences because they had understood, even before they left Ghana that their journeys were going to follow a “divinely ordained pattern.” A man said, “I knew it was God’s ways, so I waited patiently for the next step He would direct me to take.”⁵⁰¹ A woman who lived in Spain for 5 years before travelling to Australia described how she used the narrative of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years as a blueprint for her own journey: “I knew I would get to Canaan, the promised land because God was in control as he was in the lives of the Israelites. I was chosen by God to travel overseas and I knew He would take me to the point He wanted me to be.”⁵⁰² She drew on the narrative for inspiration and confidence. Some people described how they linked their decision to leave Europe for Australia to their deepest convictions that “God had chosen Australia as their ultimate destination. This is where God’s plan for me would unfold.”⁵⁰³

One of the migrants, Quansah, also described how after settling in Italy, he wanted to join some of his Ghanaian friends who were migrating to countries such as the U.S.A., U. K., and Canada but was not sure he was doing the right thing. He said the idea of going to

⁵⁰⁰ Maïté, 406.

⁵⁰¹ Personal communication with Esien at the CoPS on 27/07/2014.

⁵⁰² Personal communication with Dinah at the PCM on 16/06/2014.

⁵⁰³ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo at the CoPS on 27/07/2014.

Australia never occurred to him or most of his friends at the time. Believing that God was in control of the journey, he called his CoP pastor at Adukurom-Bompata in Ghana, to determine what God had in store for him. When he mentioned the available travel destinations he had on his mind, after series of prayers, the pastor assured him of God's approval for Australia. Acting on the assurance of the spiritual leader, Quansah migrated to Sydney, believing that as long as he remained faithful to the "divine plan," God would lead him in directions that will be beneficial to him in Australia. In this case, the narrative pushed him to seek guidance from a ritual expert.

Some interviewees also talked about how they made sense of the relative "smoothness of their journeys," especially when viewed against the backdrop of difficult circumstances. They said they understood such journeys in terms of the notion that it was God's hand at work. "You can see the work of a divine hand in our lives here... You will know that our presence in Australia is not accidental. God brought us here," they would typically say, before starting into their stories. One of such respondents, Newton, a member of the PCK, shared with me how the "smooth flow" of his journey to Australia deepened his conviction that his presence in Australia was part of God's plan for him.⁵⁰⁴ "I always tell my friends that my coming to Australia was the easiest thing God did for me in my life, because I did not even struggle to get my visa."⁵⁰⁵ He went on to share the story of a threat of deportation on his arrival. "But when I landed here, I was detained for days. I was on the verge of being deported and I prayed and anointed myself. I asked God why He did send me here, only to send me back home. Miraculously, they did not deport me... You see, it was God who wanted to show me that much as it was easy for me to come, it was He who brought me here... When things happen easily, we humans are quick to say that it was our luck."⁵⁰⁶ He described excitedly, how God performed another "miracle" for him by "opening the doors" for him to get a well-paid job in Melbourne when he had lost all hope of finding one in Woodbury. He emphasized how his turning to prayer and his obedience to God, secured him "the miracle" at a time he needed it most. "I feel God's hands in all I do and that is why I am

⁵⁰⁴ Personal communication with Newton a nutritionist and a member of the PCM, Australia on 7/06/2014.

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

not afraid of anything.”⁵⁰⁷ In Newton’s case, his understanding that his journey was divinely set up, informed the line of action he took to rescue himself from deportation upon arrival.

Esien, told a similar story, “I travelled to Australia for a work-related conference and decided to stay... Upon arrival, I applied for refugee status with many other migrants from Africa who had been here for years.”⁵⁰⁸ He emphasized that Australia granted asylum to only a few applicants and deported the rest. He was one of the lucky ones. He concluded, “It was not my effort, it was God... I could have been deported too... But I got the refugee status because God wanted to put me here.”⁵⁰⁹ In Essien's case, the experience was partly his doing, but mostly a divine orchestration. Nothing else could explain his luck. The concept of the spiritual and mundane understandings of the journeys is interesting because even though the journeys take physical forms, these migrants see them as manifestations of a “spiritual design.” The various stories in this section demonstrate an understanding among the migrants that, their journeys to Australia had a supernatural dimension, purpose, and enablement. The journeys were meant to be. The experiences as well as challenges had spiritual meanings and interpretations. The migrants did persevere because of such understandings.

The findings in the various sections on rituals and narrative in the Chapter show the use of religion in the various stages of the journey and the roles religion plays in each stage.⁵¹⁰ Scholars such as Adogame show that many prospective African migrants utilise prayer rituals to ensure problem-free journeys.⁵¹¹ Jacqueline Hagan demonstrates how undocumented migrants from Mexico live religion on the road. She states that the migrants still practice rituals of their religions on the road as a means to survive and make sense of the journey to the U.S.A.⁵¹² She maintained that religion is a guiding, protecting, and mediating force that shapes the migration process. From our discussions in the sections, the findings

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Personal communication with Esien at the PCM, Australia on 16/05/2015.

⁵¹⁰ Ebaugh; Nwando Achebe, "The Road to Italy: Nigerian Sex Workers at Home and Abroad," *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 4 (2004); Ogbu Kalu, "The Andrew Syndrome: Models in Understanding Nigerian Diaspora," in *African Immigrant Religions in America*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona and Regina Gemignani (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Ebenezer Obadare and Wale Adebaniwi, "The Visa God: Would-Be Migrants and the Instrumentalization of Religion," (Lower Hutt, N.Z: Brill, 2010); Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*; Biney; Hagan and Ebaugh.

⁵¹¹ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 23.

⁵¹² Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope, and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey*.

support the works of the scholars. My findings from both documented and undocumented migrants as well as prospective migrants in Ghana show that migrants use religion for survival, meaning-making, and to spiritually enable the migration process.

5.3 Conclusion

The influence of the Pentecostal MR played out through the journeys of the migrant members in the PCM and CoPS. This MR informed their actions, timing, their understandings and the conduct of the journeys. I showed how, through the practice of using religion for protection, survival, guidance, as a mediating force, and as a meaning-making mechanism during the journey to Australia, migrant members of the CoP and the PCK carried the Pentecostal MR to their destination points in Australia. The journey to Australia is the main avenue through which migrants carry Ghana's Pentecostal expressions of MR to the Australian diaspora.

I also demonstrated how the success of the journey bolsters migrants' belief in the efficacy of their MRs, ensuring their continuing reliance on them during the settlement phase of their migrations. The MR did not only serve as a representation by informing the actions of the migrants, but more importantly, it did something. The practice bolstered confidence and justified the purpose of the journeys. The transit phase MR represented an understanding and practice for travelling overseas. When these migrants succeeded in the journeys, they viewed their success as a kind of spiritual and temporal victory. Many also viewed the horrific circumstances of their journeys, and subsequent victory through their use of MR, as evidence that migration is a fraught process of warfare in which the hand of God is required in all stages. The use of religion (rituals and narratives) to access divine protection and guidance, and as meaning-making mechanism in the journey, represents a continuation of the MR. In Tweed's terms, MR "flows" alongside the prospective migrant, as it is used to facilitate their successful transit. In the next two Chapters, I will discuss the continuation and subsequent changes of the MR's rituals and narratives, as members of the churches settled in Australia. I will demonstrate how the continuation and shifts in Australia, transmutes the MR.

CHAPTER SIX

POST-MIGRATION RITUALS: THE PCM AND MR IN MELBOURNE

6.0 Introduction

In the literature on African Pentecostalism in the diaspora, there is evidence of the continuation of African Pentecostal ritual practices cultivated in the homeland. Scholars such as Adogame have described the deliverance, healing, prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving rituals African migrant churches in Europe and North America use to eliminate satanic agents responsible for carrying out “spiritual terrorist attacks” such as sickness, unemployment, social insecurity, death, and emotional stress.⁵¹³ Through the rituals, the churches demonstrate the power they have over evil supernatural agents such as witches and wizards, which, they claim, inflict harm on African migrants in the diaspora.

In this Chapter, I examine post-migration rituals of the PCM's MR in Australia. Narratives also played important roles in the PCM's ritual process in Australia, just as they did in Ghana. The Chapter addresses the nature of these rituals, the mechanisms through which worshippers establish them in the diaspora, how similar or different they are from rituals in the homeland, and what they do for migrant worshippers. I base the discussion on data gathered in Australia. Because of its strong emphasis on rituals, I use data drawn from the Power Chapel in Melbourne's (PCM's) post-migration worship tradition. I focus my reflections on four questions. How did the Ghanaian migrants introduce MR rituals into the Ghanaian diaspora in Australia? What are these rituals like? In terms of their formats and uses, what continuities and changes do we see in these rituals? How can we link the changes and the continuities in the rituals with worshippers' post-migration situations, place-making, and the reverse mission agenda Ghana migrant churches in Australia adopt?

The Chapter argues that the migrant worshippers of the PCK utilise Pentecostal MR as they seek ways to negotiate challenges linked with settling in Melbourne. The worshipping group they create for the practice of MR rituals is the main avenue through which Ghanaian migrants establish MR in the host land, Australia. In continuity with the practices in the homeland, the PCM uses rituals instrumentally, that is, as spiritual devices to eliminate migrant members' challenges in their settling process. I maintain that as worshippers make efforts to address the challenges that come with their dislocation, place-making becomes a

⁵¹³ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 93-95.

central focus of the PCM's rituals. Through ritual practice, migrant worshippers transform a mundane space, a warehouse, into an African sacred space. This sacred space is also the venue for defining and performing migrant identities. It is the place where migrants make important social contact with one another.

My second argument is that the post-migration MR rituals at the PCM form the foundation for PCK's reverse mission project in Australia. This is a conscious project driven by the leadership of PCK in Ghana. As the migrant worshipping Cell group encountered Kusi-Boateng at the Power Chapel in Sydney in 2012 and became a Church (the PCM), the PCK leader (Kusi-Boateng) pushed PCM's rituals for a reverse mission agenda. As directed by Kusi-Boateng, the PCM intensified its use of rituals in solving migrant problems in Australia. However, its focus on the post-migration experiences of worshippers, the need for it to adapt Ghanaian religious practices to the religious ethos of the new locale, Australia, and the need to adopt new practices to attract and accommodate members of the host community led to innovations in the PCM's MR rituals, for a reverse mission project. Consequently, there is evidence of both continuity and change in the PCMs' MR rituals in what I identify as the post-migration phase.

To demonstrate my arguments in response to the questions, I have organized this Chapter in the following pattern. I begin by describing how a worshipping Cell migrants created to address their spiritual and social questions became the PCM after the group's encounter with Kusi-Boateng. I then discuss the ritual culture of the PCM by focusing on some rituals, which show continuities and shifts, and the subsequent transmutation of the group's MR. I discuss some rituals that specifically address questions arising from the Church's adoption of a reverse mission agenda. The last section discusses the place of PCM rituals in migrant place-making. The Chapter draws from interviews with African, migrant members of the PCM and personal observation of these rituals between 2014 and 2015. The migrants I interviewed are mostly from Ghana. I also interviewed some members who came from Zimbabwe and other African nations because these migrants founded the Church and were able to provide a first-hand account of how the events unfolded. Many of my informants hold key positions in the Church currently. I also based the discussions on DVD recordings of the 2015 ritual-focused conferences.

6.1 The Power Chapel in Melbourne, Australia

The Power Chapel in Australia (PCM), and other African migrant churches (such as the Church of Pentecost in Sydney addressed in the next Chapter) did not appear in an empty religious – or indeed Pentecostal landscape in Australia. In addition to its established denominational heritage, Australian Christianity has numerous Pentecostal churches, and these include some of the largest and most high profile churches in the country. The Australian Pentecostal scene includes churches that emerged in the classical Pentecostal tradition of the early twentieth century. Some of the churches are “imports,” such as the Assemblies of God, and the Newfrontiers – a newer church that originally began in the United Kingdom. There are also homegrown Australian Pentecostal megachurches. Of these, Hillsong and C3 are the largest in Sydney; in Melbourne, PlanetShakers; and the Influencers Church in Adelaide. These megachurches have multiple campuses, and are characterised by the expressive worship tradition and the belief in the Holy Spirit that are common to other Pentecostal churches – including the PCM.⁵¹⁴

This broader landscape is important to understand as part of the context in which the PCM functions. For the Australian churches influence and interact with migrant churches in Australia, such as the PCM – whether directly or indirectly. These newer churches have attracted scholarly attention in recent times, alongside Australian Pentecostalism more generally.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ Philip Hughes, *The Pentecostals in Australia* (Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996); “100 Years of Pentecostalism,” *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association* 16, no. 4 (2006); Mark Hutchinson, “Evangelical, Revivalist, and Pentecostal Religions,” *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* Second Edition, no. 1 (2015); Mark Jennings, “Breaking Free to the Limit: Playing with Foucault, Otto, and Pentecostal Experience,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29, no. 1 (2014).

⁵¹⁵ Daniel E. Albrecht, “Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking through the Lens of Ritual,” *Pneuma* 14, no. 1 (1992); Elizabeth Miller, “A Planting of the Lord: Contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Australia” (University of Sydney, 2016); Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal Christianity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Mark Jennings, “Won’t You Break Free?’ an Ethnography of Music and the Divine-Human Encounter at an Australian Pentecostal Church,” *Culture and Religion* 9, no. 2 (2008).

In her works on Brazilian Pentecostal churches and spiritism in Australia, such as Saint John Church of God, Cristina Rocha demonstrates that religious institutions in Australia have influences and interactions with the practices and the establishments of migrant churches.⁵¹⁶ She also shows that religious practices travel and hybridize with local beliefs and issues in host nations.⁵¹⁷ One of the key points here is that despite the “strength” of the Australian megachurches in influencing and interacting with migrants and their churches in Australia, these have not proven particularly attractive to African migrants – they have not cornered that market. Rather, the African migrants focus on introducing their Pentecostal religiosities to serve their migrant population, and gradually open up to the host population as they gain acceptance and popularity in the host community. The discussion above is important to understand the religious landscape within which the PCM emerged.

Famous in the African migrant community of Melbourne for the efficacy of its rituals in removing obstacles that stand between migrants and the realization of their dreams, the PCM started in 2011 as a prayer group. A Zimbabwean migrant, Bruce Chimanya, his family, and seven other African migrants in Melbourne, four from Ghana and three from Zimbabwe, initiated this group.⁵¹⁸ Because he was the most active participant among the worshippers, Chimanya became the leader. All of the founders of the prayer group were familiar with Kusi-Boateng’s Pentecostal tradition before their journeys overseas. Many of them said they were regular participants at the prophet’s “Signs and Tokens” conferences in Ghana.

Before they created the prayer group, the migrants worshipped at Australian churches. Many of them described their experiences in the churches in disparaging terms. The migrants said they did not feel at home in the Australian churches because the liturgies did not address their cultural and spiritual concerns adequately as migrants. These migrants

⁵¹⁶ Cristina Rocha, "Transnational Pentecostal Connections: An Australian Megachurch and a Brazilian Church in Australia," *PentecoStudies* 12, no. 1 (2013); Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transmigrant Migration," *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (1995); Cristina Rocha, and Gabriela Coronado, "Imagining Latin America in Australia: Migration, Culture and Multiculturalism," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 35, no. 5 (2014); Cristina Rocha, "Seeking Healing Transnationally: Australians, John of God and Brazilian Spiritism," *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (2009).

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Personal communication with Bruce Chimanya resident pastor at the PCM on 03/06/2014. The reason for the dominance of the Ghanaian and Zimbabwean diaspora communities in the PCM is Kusi-Boateng’s links with the Zimbabwean Pentecostals. The Church demonstrated this during the 2014 “Signs and Token” conferences in Ghana where some of the prophets who minister are Zimbabweans (such as Hubert and Beverly Angel). This is an indication that with the PCK’s and PCM’s MR rituals, the clientele is not only Ghanaian.

had come from African Pentecostal religious backgrounds that emphasized practices such as faith healing, prophecy, exorcism, spontaneous prayer, and deliverance from witchcraft, exuberant liturgical expression, and dreams; these elements were less emphasized, if not absent in the liturgies of the Australian churches. Furthermore, many of the migrants had experienced the efficacy of the rituals of African Pentecostal traditions in the course of their journeys and had arrived in Australia with zeal to continue these practices in obtaining residency and other migrant related concerns. The desire for a religious practice that would address their spiritual concerns in culturally familiar ways made it necessary for the migrants to create the worshipping Cell.⁵¹⁹

Beginning as a gathering of families that held bi-weekly meetings in members' homes, the group increased in numbers as news of members' breakthroughs attracted other migrants, especially from the Ghanaian and Zimbabwean diaspora communities.⁵²⁰ The breakthroughs included the healing of members' illnesses, success with the acquisition of visa and resident permits, gaining employment, and success with business contracts. According to Newton (an engineer), the various breakthroughs and dramatic growth in the number of the group's members were signs that "it was time to move out of the homes into the open" to serve the larger African migrant and host Australian community.⁵²¹ A point that is clear from the narrative on the origins of the worshipping group that became the PC in Melbourne is that, the need for a space and a community of worshippers to address spiritual questions arising from the migrant situation pushed the founders to create a group. Another point the story demonstrates is that the migrants' desire was for a familiar religiosity that would speak to their post-migration concerns.

An encounter with Kusi-Boateng in Sydney increased the fortunes of the group. The encounter transformed the prayer group into a church. The event took place on October 2012. Some members of the nascent worshipping group attended an African Pentecostal Conference at God's Power Ministries, a Ghanaian migrant Church in Sydney. The resident Prophet of that church, Richard Amoaye, had invited Kusi-Boateng to preside over the

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Personal communication with Newton at the PCM on 04/06/2014.

weeklong conference.⁵²² Amoaye is one of Kusi-Boateng's 700 "spiritual sons" overseas.⁵²³ During the rituals on the final day of the conference, Kusi-Boateng prophesied that Bruce Chimanya's prayer group would expand in number and extend its influence to the larger African community in Melbourne and the entirety of Australia. Kusi-Boateng then anointed Chimanya (who is now the pastor of the PCM) and charged him with the task of leading the group as a Church.⁵²⁴ This event marked the birth of the prayer Cell as a Church and an Australian extension of Kusi-Boateng's PCK in Ghana. After this event, the prayer Cell adopted the name, Power Chapel, Melbourne (PCM) in December 2012. The Church's name indicates its affiliation with the Power Chapel Worldwide (PCW) and its submission to the leadership of Kusi-Boateng.⁵²⁵ Kusi-Boateng's prophecy also motivated many of the migrant members of the group to attend Bible colleges to prepare themselves to lead the Church whenever this became necessary.

Since its beginning, Kusi-Boateng has visited the Church every year to lead heavily ritualized devotional sessions. The PCM has grown in size and popularity; members identify its distinctive rituals as a key factor in the Church's growth. The growth in the number of worshippers following the encounter with Kusi-Boateng, meant that it was outgrowing the spaces in the homes of members, where the group met regularly for worship. Complaints from neighbours about the noise they made during all-night devotional sessions also made the push to find a permanent place necessary. This led to the purchase of a former warehouse at 863 Princess Highway, Springvale—an industrial hub in Melbourne. They transformed this structure into a church setting, and have since then met regularly for worship there.

It is important at this point to note how Kusi-Boateng saw the presence of a migrant originated worshipping Cell in Australia as an opportunity to extend the influence of his PCK in Ghana to Melbourne. This means that the original worshipping Cell was the "launching

⁵²² Kusi-Boateng is a known neo-Pentecostal Prophet and ritual expert in Ghana and among Zimbabweans, both at home and in the Diaspora because of his two Zimbabwean 'spiritual sons,' Prophets Emmanuel Makandiwa of ChristTV, as well as Hubert and Beverley Angel. Kusi-Boateng is also popular among Nigerians, Kenyans, and most part of West and South Africa for his Prophetic and ritual expertise, especially among the international travellers.

⁵²³ Telephone communication with Shamiso (wife of pastor Chimanya) at the PCM on 19/08/2014

⁵²⁴ Personal communication with Newton in his vehicle as he picked me up for a Friday night vigil on 04/06/2014.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

pad” for the PCK’s overseas-outreach agenda or reverse mission. As I have indicated elsewhere in the thesis, scholars, including those of religion, social science, history, theology, and a cross-section of the media are currently focusing attention on the reverse missions of African churches in the diaspora in the West. The notion underlying the reverse mission paradigm is that churches from the global-South are making the West (global-North) their proselytizing fields and targeting Western membership—changing the normal course of “missionizing.”⁵²⁶

Existing literature notes how the reverse mission agenda has become popular among African-led churches with pastors and missionaries commissioned to lead already existing churches or initiate new ones in the diaspora. Such research also shows how agents of reverse mission anchor the rationale for their activities on the premise of a divine commission to “spread the good news” to a highly secularized West that is experiencing an abysmal fall in “church attendance, desacralized church buildings, and moral decadence.”⁵²⁷ One key feature, seldom emphasized in the literature on reverse mission, is the central role of migrants from the global-South, in this movement. The missions are mainly products of MR. Adogame has noted that the success of the missionary efforts of the churches is largely attributable to the activity of “unconventional missionaries” (migrants).⁵²⁸ I build on Adogame’s observation, arguing that for members of the PCM, they initiate the reverse mission agenda in Australia for the PCK. As they extend MR from the homeland to Australia, they create worshipping Cells. Local Ghanaian churches seize these migrants’ prayer Cell initiatives to establish their reverse missions. Post-migration MR is the foundation of the PCK’s reverse mission in Australia. Furthermore, because they started as migrant religiosities, the Church must try to balance satisfying migrant ritual needs with satisfying mission needs. However, often, the balance tilts more heavily towards the meeting of migrants needs. As we have seen above, the story of the origins of the PCM demonstrates this theme. These

⁵²⁶ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*; Biney; Wisdom Tetteh, ed. *Transnationalism, Religion and the African Diaspora in Canada: An Examination of Ghanaians and Ghanaian Churches*ibid.; Afe Adogame, “Who Do They Think They Are? Mental Images and Unfolding of an African Diaspora in Germany,” in *Christianity in Africa and African the Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage*, ed. Roswith Gerloff and Klaus Hock Afe Adogame (London: Continuum, 2008).

⁵²⁷ *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 170.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 181.

migrants introduced the Pentecostal MR rituals on which PCM is currently building its reverse mission tradition in Australia.

In the discussion that follows, I offer an account of how some rituals at the PCM reflect continuities with PCK's practices in Ghana, while others demonstrate changes resulting from adaptations the PCM has made so that it can address questions that are specific to the experiences of African migrant worshippers. We will also see how some aspects of PCM's rituals reflect its efforts to address specific questions that arise from its status as a reverse mission in Australia. PCM's ritual culture is a product of its quest to address needs of migrants as well as its own needs as an African mission in Australia. Figure 27 shows PCM members worshipping at the Princess Highway premises.



Figure 27. The PCM membership at worship in Melbourne, Australia

6.2 The Ritual Life at the PCM: Post-Migration (MR) rituals in Australia

The transition from a prayer group to a Church, was the beginning of Kusi-Boateng's PCK in Australia. According to my interviewees, the Church is well-known for its distinct ritual-oriented conferences. The PCM organizes the conferences every year and invites worshippers from all ethnicities, lifestyles, and occupations to attend just as the PCK does during "Signs and Tokens" conferences in Ghana.⁵²⁹ The PCM invites Kusi-Boateng and his "spiritual sons" as well as other African Pentecostal ritual experts to preside over events during the conference. Just like its mother Church in Ghana, the PCM has garnered fame

⁵²⁹ Telephone communication with Pastor Bruce Chimanya on 18/11/2015.

among African migrants in Melbourne as the place to go for powerful rituals such as anointing, deliverance, and healing. A migrant said, "It is the place to go for solutions if you are lonely, depressed, and having spiritual attacks." The PCM's advertisements on billboards, banners, and posters promise to offer worshippers spiritual solutions to all kinds of problems. The notion that the Church has solutions to all problems is a recurring theme in members' descriptions of the spiritual benefits of attending PCM's devotional ritual conferences.

PCM's worshippers view intensive "warfare" prayers, prophecies, anointing, healing, and "deliverance," which constitute the ritual activities during conferences, as conduits for the transfer of the power of the Holy Spirit to them. With this power, they can fight against agents of supernatural harm responsible for the failures migrants' experience. Worshippers describe these agents as "shuttling across geographical boundaries unrestrained."⁵³⁰ Destroying these agents through the magical use of the Holy Spirit forms the nerve centre of PCM's ritual praxis.⁵³¹ The ritual action-oriented conferences are in segments. Each segment is full of religious symbolism and meanings. While some are designed to destroy works ("break yokes") of malevolent agents stressing the lives of migrant worshippers, the PCM also designs rituals to "open the heavens" over the lives of worshippers to enable their success in Australia. Figures 28 and 29 are pictures of flyers for the "Yoke Breaking" and "Open Heavens" Conferences themes. The pictures indicate some the ritual focus of the PCM conferences. The themes for the ritual conferences show the emphases on ritual practices that would "open the heavens" or destroy impediments ("yokes") for migrants who the Church claims live under "closed heavens" in Australia. Church conferences employ many, but these examples represent the main ideas behind the various rituals.

⁵³⁰ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 89.

⁵³¹ Personal communication with Pastor Chimanya at the PCM on 03/06/2014. The Holy Spirit is the benevolent spirit that is central to Pentecostal/Charismatic ritual praxis.



Figure 28. Flyer for the “Yoke breaking” ritual conference



Figure 29. A Ritual focus of the “Open Heavens” ritual conference

The rituals as well as their formats are similar to the homeland practices. For example, the ritual language is English, both at home and in the Diaspora. According to Kusi-Boateng, the ritual-oriented conferences at the PCM, just like in the PCK, are not for only Ghanaian migrants; while his audiences speak different native languages and dialects, all of them understand and speak English.

A striking difference between PCK and PCM is that PCM's rituals address worshippers' existential needs, concerns of migrants, and persons living in Australia. More importantly, the ritual time structure and duration in PCM differs from that of the PCK. In the discussion that follows, I offer an account of what these rituals are like, what challenges worshippers intend to eliminate by using them, how the rituals are different from, or similar to, ritual practices in the homeland, and how they advance migrants place-making and reverse mission agenda of PCK. I have selected only rituals of PCM that demonstrate these themes effectively.

6.2.1 Rituals against the "Winds behind the Storms"

PCM's conferences are replete with ritual, and so offer crucial insights into the Church's ritual practices. In July 2014 and 2015, I attended and observed a few of the one-off and annual ritual sessions the PCM organized. The one-off ritual conferences included the "Behold I Give You Power" conference which Apostle C. Mahovoh, an itinerant Prophet from the Heal the World Ministries in Zimbabwe presided over.⁵³² The annual ritual conferences targeting African migrants included the "Cross Over into Prophetic Destiny," "Open Heavens," "Yoke breaking" and "Power" conferences.⁵³³ During the 2015 "Open Heavens" conference, the Church invited Kusi-Boateng and two of his spiritual sons: Prophet Richard Amoaye, from the God's Power Ministries in Sydney, and Prophet E. Makandiwa of the United Family International Church in Zimbabwe. The five-day conference began on the 8 July 2015 at 6:00 pm and closed at 10:00 pm each night, with over 300 African migrants and other nationals in Australia attending.⁵³⁴

Kusi-Boateng was the main itinerant ritual specialist during the last four days of the "Open Heavens" ritual-oriented conference. To set the right tone for the rituals, Kusi-Boateng started by reading Mark 4:35-39. His use of the story in this passage offers another example of how narratives and rituals intersect in Ghanaian Pentecostal worship. Kusi-Boateng had carefully selected this passage, enabling him to locate the migrant experiences in scripture, and inspire worshippers to impose scriptural meanings on their migrant experiences. He read the passage, "That day when evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' Leaving the crowd behind, the disciples took Jesus along, just as He was, into the

⁵³² The "Open Heavens" conference was a ritual service organized by the PCM with the itinerant ritual specialist (Kusi-Boateng) as the special guest.

⁵³³ Telephone communication with Pastor Chimanya on the 12/08/2015.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

boat."⁵³⁵ Walking from the pulpit towards the congregation, he started into his exegesis of the text. "The verse says, although there were other boats, yet a furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat that the disciples were in with Jesus so that it was nearly swamped... the disciples woke Jesus up as He was sleeping... The verse 39 says, when Jesus got up, he rebuked the wind and said to the storm, 'Peace! Be still!'... Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."⁵³⁶

Kusi-Boateng explained to the congregation how the verses spoke directly to their own crossing over from Ghana and other countries to Australia and their bitter experiences as African migrants. He linked the source of their difficult experiences, hindrances, and challenges to "strong winds," a situation in the Australian Diaspora, which makes lives difficult for migrants. He said, "Just like the disciples, you had left the multitudes in Africa for better lives in Australia, yet there are 'storms' produced by winds' that make it almost impossible for you to reach 'the other side' of your lives in Australia." He elaborated on what he meant by "winds and storms":

Church, there is something that happened to your mother, grandmother, father or grandfather in Africa that is happening to you here... A generational curse or spell does not know geographical boundaries... Spiritual forces that fight against your lineage do not care about your new location; they are able to locate you! The enemy wanted Jesus' boat to capsize in order to end His mission, hence, the 'strong winds' that created the storm... The 'storms' of failures, denial, and debts you are facing here is the result of the 'winds' behind it... Check in your families, how many people have travelled or built homes and had the education or businesses you are having here... Do not take it for granted and think that this is the life of a migrant here... The 'storms' you face are the manifestations of the 'winds' behind it... You have to look beyond the 'storms.' Identify 'the winds.'⁵³⁷

Kusi-Boateng was conditioning the minds of the migrants to look beyond their immediate situations and seek the root causes—"winds." He was also constructing the theme for the specific rituals he had prepared for the worshippers that night. In the tradition of the Church, ritual conferences have main themes; ritual experts have to develop sub-themes for each ritual session during these conferences.

Kusi-Boateng began the ritual actions that would open the heavens or make the "winds" cease. He ordered the congregation, "Be on your feet, raise your hands and say

⁵³⁵ The preaching of Kusi-Boateng in preparation for anointing and Prophetic rituals at the PCM, Australia on 10/07/2015.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

these after me, in the name of Jesus! (Repeated three times). Let every 'wind' that propels the 'storms' in my life be stopped permanently!"⁵³⁸ The raising of hands, stamping of feet, and praying in known or unknown tongues were all actions claimed to stop the "spiritual winds." In addition, Kusi-Boateng used "standing" as another ritual symbol, the sign of taking spiritual authority.⁵³⁹ The ritual actions channel benevolent spirits to the targets worshippers intend to engage.

The rituals communicate directly or symbolically to worshippers the actions they need to take to address challenges as migrants. When Kusi-Boateng asked worshippers to stand up he was communicating the need for them to be assertive in spiritual and mundane affairs. The lesson here is that through rituals, migrant worshippers are equipped with values deemed necessary for their success as migrants. Faced with all the challenges that come with living in someone else's country, Kusi-Boateng identified assertiveness as a value migrants needed in order to thrive. Kusi-Boateng went further, however, claiming that his words and the associated ritual actions were efficacious in themselves: "Whatever we say during the course of the rituals has the power to create, destroy, change situations, and bless."⁵⁴⁰ "This is why we allow individuals to say what they would wish to happen in their lives."⁵⁴¹

At a point during the ritual, Kusi-Boateng motioned to the congregation to stand up and raise their hands. He started to pray for their "deliverance" from the hands of the "winds" behind the "storms" in their lives overseas. "Deliverance" in the Pentecostal parlance, as I have indicated in earlier Chapters, involves prayer rituals meant to set a person free from evil forces and their activities. After loud prayers accompanied with hand gestures, and prophetic declarations to stop the "winds" behind the "storms," Kusi-Boateng explained that the "winds" target the migrants "because of what they carry":

Remember the Bible says that there were other smaller boats and yet the storm attacked the larger boat. There is something that you carry that goes beyond what you have and so when the 'winds with its storms' come, they will only come for your boat because of who sits in it... The 'storms' would spare others but will not spare you... Your skin colour or level of education does not matter... The 'winds' target you

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Telephone communication with Angela the announcer at the PCM on 04/08/2015.

⁵⁴⁰ Telephone Communication with Pastor Bruce Chimanya on 03/06/2015.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

and releases the 'storms' against you because of who (Jesus) sits in your boat here in Australia.⁵⁴²

In this exegesis, Kusi-Boateng stated that the migrants were experiencing various forms of discrimination "because they are not just ordinary migrants. They are rather, a people who carry something unique (Jesus)."⁵⁴³ This interpretation suggests that the rituals are also being used as a means to help migrants construct a self-perception and identity that will cushion them against discrimination, which my respondents said it was a common predicament of migrants in Australia. Telling migrants that they are not just ordinary migrants but people with Jesus, or God-chosen, is a way of helping them construct positive self-perceptions.

Using "winds" as a metaphor for agents of supernatural harm that thwart the efforts of Ghanaian migrants in Australia, Kusi-Boateng directed the next ritual at a specific type of "wind" he called the "southeastern wind." Kusi-Boateng said, this "wind created storms" or challenges for migrants who lived in the southeastern parts of Australia. "Settling in such locales such as in Melbourne exposes migrants and anyone else to such 'winds' and prevents them from enjoying the full benefits God has in store for them."⁵⁴⁴ Kusi-Boateng at this point asked each member of the congregation to remain standing, while holding the hands of the person that stood east to him or her. The holding of hands symbolized the unity that the worshippers needed to combat such a formidable problem. Starting into a prayer, he began to bind the "southeastern wind." He offered a detailed description of the problem the ritual was engaging: "Hold your hands and begin to pray! There is a powerful 'southeastern wind' behind the 'storms' that you call drug addiction, crimes, and failures. If you live in the southeastern portion of any state or city in Australia, check the records, and see with your 'spiritual eyes' what is prevalent in those parts of the nation. Melbourne is in the southeastern part of mainland Australia. Other places include Gold Coast. It is also in the southeast of Queensland... In 2011, Gold Coast was known as the crime capital of Australia."⁵⁴⁵ The rituals for "winds behind the storm" do not stand-alone. Statements accompany them.

⁵⁴² Preaching of Kusi-Boateng in his preparation for anointing and Prophetic rituals at the PCM, Australia on 10/07/2015.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ritual ministration of Prophet Kusi-Boateng during the "Open Heavens" Conference at the PCM on 10/07/2015.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

The prayer Kusi-Boateng said was simply statements of facts about vices associated with places in southeastern Australia. However, the PCM believes that these statements are divine revelations. The Church believes that when members or ritual experts clearly describe the details of a situation they identify as problematic, rituals effectively act on them. As he continued praying against the “southeastern winds,” Kusi-Boateng revealed the details of southeastern parts of Australia and elsewhere as problematic:

All over the world, wherever there is a southeast, there are many problems, poverty, neglects, and devastations. When you go to England and the U.S.A., the southeastern parts have major evil practices, poverty, and demonic activities. I hear in Australia the southeastern parts have all the problems... Children living there are on drugs, crimes, and indulge in demonic practices in the name of 'New Era.' Do not think it is normal.⁵⁴⁶

Kusi-Boateng is clearly constructing a “spiritual geography” of the southeastern parts of Australia. Spiritual geographies offer religious interpretations of happenings in specific geographical spaces.⁵⁴⁷

The construction of a “spiritual geography” of the southeastern parts of Australia in the context of the PCM rituals, promotes the understanding that social vices in these geographical locations have spiritual causes that Pentecostal rituals can destroy. In Tweed’s assertion, when migrants cross over to new destinations one of the questions they must address is where to dwell or settle.⁵⁴⁸ He suggests that religions help migrants answer this question. Through his identification and construction of a “spiritual geography” in this ritual, Kusi-Boateng is helping migrants answer the question of where to dwell in two ways. First, he was explaining any trouble they were experiencing, perhaps exceptionalizing it. Second, he was encouraging the migrants to be spiritually alert and attentive by suggesting that they had landed in unusually challenging territory. Kusi-Boateng’s statements provide migrants with clues and directives concerning geographical locations in Australia they are spiritually safe to settle in, and places they had to avoid or settle with spiritual protection and caution. His statement also suggests that migrants must avoid the southeastern parts of Australia. He also suggests to those who already live in the southeastern portions that the Church has an antidote to their spiritually caused challenges in the rituals of the PCM. More important is

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Martha L. Henderson, "What Is Spiritual Geography?," *Geographical Review* 83, no. 4 (1993).

⁵⁴⁸ Tweed, 80-120.

how this MR ritual plays out in addressing where and how migrants have to live. The ritual and the accompanying narratives construct understandings of migrants' place-making in Australia, thus, to avoid the southeastern portions of their new home.

The construction of a "spiritual geography" also helps to establish the migrants' religious practices and reverse mission. By claiming that the Church has antidote to spiritually caused challenges through its rituals, Kusi-Boateng was setting the Church up, for not only the Ghanaian migrants, but also Australians, especially the attendees of the conference. The PCM would appeal to members of the host community who may be living in Melbourne, or who also identify with the southeast notion.

During the conferences in 2014, there were Australian nationals in attendance. A telephone communication with an Australian couple, Olivia and her husband Jack, who worshipped at the PCM regularly, indicated that, the Church's stance and distinct rituals attracted them to worship in the Church after their first visit in 2013. Jack shared, "I knew Bruce from work. One time, he gave me an invite to a conference that the Church held and hosted Kusi-Boateng in December 2013. I was hesitant, but came out of courtesy. To my amazement, I witnessed tremendous spiritual things that I did not understand how they worked, but they were exciting and gave me and Olivia, the cause to keep coming to the Church..."⁵⁴⁹ Jack concluded that, "We have also invited a couple of friends and family to witness and experience what we had in this African Church... Some still come, because they love the power and style of worship."⁵⁵⁰ What is important here is that, Australians of deep religious convictions living in southeastern sections will begin to look at the PCM as a new religious group offering a diagnosis of their social problems, and a spiritual solution to them. What we see here is that, post-migration Pentecostal MR is also serving another purpose, that is, it is enhancing the tradition's appeal and influence abroad.

6.2.2 Rituals against Witchcraft Activities

In continuity with the PCK's MR rituals, the PCM also has anti-witchcraft rituals. The concept of witchcraft, which is the basis for the PCM's rituals in connection with international travel, is the same as in Ghana, in the homeland; put simply, witches prevent the success of individuals, including those who seek to travel abroad. In the Diaspora, witches can make life

⁵⁴⁹ Telephone conversation with Jack, an Australian bank clerk and regular attendee of the PCM, on 16/08/2016.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

difficult for migrants. However, the PCM's anti-witchcraft ritual language and ritual format demonstrate novel understandings. These novelties reflect the migrant experiences of worshippers and the Church's reverse mission agenda.

The PCM believes that witches live illegally in Australia, tormenting the migrants, and derailing their efforts. The PCM's anti-witchcraft rituals target two types of witches. One group of witches operate from the homeland. "These witches send spells to the Diaspora to afflict migrants. Another group of witches live in Australia. These witches had managed to travel as migrants from Ghana and landed secretly into Australia or were ordinary migrants who became witches or wizards upon settling in Australia or witches already living in the host land."⁵⁵¹ In Ghana, the PCK ritual experts "cast" witchcraft out of victims through exorcism. Sometimes the ritual experts go further to destroy the witchcraft by burning the "witchcraft substance."⁵⁵² Traditional Ghanaian communities believe that the witchcraft substance is the repository of a witch's evil power.⁵⁵³ It is an object the witch locates somewhere in the body or keeps in a secret location outside.⁵⁵⁴ It is the substance that ritual experts locate and burn or cast out from the bodies of individuals or in talismans, bracelets, rings, or beads. However, at the PCM the witchcraft substance is rather "deported." The PCM's ritual language during anti-witchcraft rituals reflects the status of worshippers as migrants. Hence, the Church refers to its anti-witchcraft rituals as "deportation" rituals for malevolent forces and calls the forces "illegal spiritual citizens," who fight against the lives of the migrants. In this case, the ritual experts configure the ritual language to suit the new ritual space in Australia and status of clientele.

The PCM uses the term "deportations" to refer to the exorcisms because the rituals entail the sending of "witchcraft substance" back to the homeland, or wherever it came from, after exorcising the victim. Because in the host community, deportation is a process migrant worshippers and those from the host community know, and can easily relate to. The use of this language then is deliberate. It enables migrant worshippers, some of whom are not Africans, to understand clearly Ghanaian anti-witchcraft rituals. The practice of burning the witchcraft substance is also conspicuously absent in the PCM's anti-witchcraft ritual

⁵⁵¹ Telephone communication with Newton on 19/02/2015.

⁵⁵² Mensah Adinkra, *Witchcraft, Witches, and Violence in Ghana* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 57.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

culture. According to Kusi-Boateng, many of the non-African worshippers cannot easily relate to this practice because anti-witchcraft ritual practice does not feature prominently in their cultural beliefs. "Witchcraft is rather celebrated or revered." This de-emphasis represents a ritual innovation that the PCM has made so that worshippers from non-African cultures can feel more at home in the Church. In this way, the PCM shapes its MR ritual praxis to accommodate both migrants' witchcraft concerns and yet take cognisance of the PCK's reverse mission agenda.

Prophets Kusi-Boateng, Mahovoh, and Chimanya performed anti-witchcraft rituals to "deport" witches and other "illegal spirits" during the "Yoke Breaking," "Open Heavens," and "Behold I do give you Power" conferences.⁵⁵⁵ After praying for worshippers during the second night of the "Yoke Breaking" conference, Kusi-Boateng made prophetic statements to deport the witches. He then asked Chimanya to pour the anointing oil that he was holding in to his (Kusi-Boateng's) palm. Kusi-Boateng then called out a name, "Tapiwah!" A man ran to the front and knelt before Kusi-Boateng. Kusi-Boateng touched the forehead of the man with the oil in his right hand and prophesied: "I see the devil trying to cut short your purpose here by giving you stroke... Any plan of the enemy to destroy you illegally is broken in the name of Jesus...! These evil forces have no legal rights to hinder your progress by giving you stroke to cause your deportation! The witches and demons are the illegal citizens here and must leave you now in the name of Jesus! I decree the deportation now in Jesus name!"⁵⁵⁶ The man began weeping, shaking uncontrollably, and fell on the floor after the prophecy and Kusi-Boateng poured anointing oil on his head.

Prior to the deliverance and anointing rituals on the fourth day of the "Open Heavens" conference, Kusi-Boateng explained that apart from migrants who are themselves witches, spells of malevolent agents and witches from the homelands and the host land can bewitch migrants or cause challenges for them in Australia. Kusi-Boateng added that migrants' dreams about death, or sometimes about images of dead people and coffins, or their strong and inexplicable urges to go back to their homelands, are signs of the witches' spiritual attacks.⁵⁵⁷ This revelation inspired worshippers to see their participation in the

⁵⁵⁵ Personal communication with Pastor Chimanya at the PCM on 03/06/2014.

⁵⁵⁶ Statements during the 'Prophetic ministration' of Kusi-Boateng at the 'Open Heavens' Conference, 2015.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

rituals as urgent. Upon hearing the statements, the congregation got into a frenzy of prayer. Many began to stamp their feet, while others clapped.

After the ecstatic prayer, Kusi-Boateng walked briskly and sprinkled anointing oil into the congregation while issuing a command for the Holy Spirit to single out the people who dream about death. Some congregants screamed; others started vomiting; others also fell down and rolled on the floor; while some shook while standing. Kusi-Boateng asked the ushers to bring the trembling members to the altar. He sprinkled more of the anointing oil on these people and declared: "Tonight, through this anointing, I see the infiltration of the power and fire of the Holy Ghost; I see God changing destinies tonight and replacing what the enemy did."⁵⁵⁸ Whatever charm you have swallowed or eaten or have been inserted or hidden in any part of your body is departing you now and being deported to wherever it came from, now, in the name of Jesus!" In this ritual, the ritual expert utilised the familiar language, 'deportation.' The public nature of this ritual is a continuity of the anti-witchcraft rituals in the homeland.

PCM's anti-witchcraft rituals target worshippers in the congregation who are witches. Kusi-Boateng explained that it was dangerous for members to travel to Australia with spirits of witchcraft from Africa because the spirits will derail God's plans for their lives in Australia. He said this explains the use of such rituals to set free migrant victims. Belief in the reality of witchcraft and in the ritual techniques the PCM has designed to combat it, provides one area of continuity. Nevertheless, shifts in Pentecostal beliefs and cosmologies are also evident. One notion the traditional and Pentecostal worldviews have previously shared is that witches are unable to travel abroad because they cannot cross the seas with their power.⁵⁵⁹ The PCM's anti-witchcraft rituals show that post-migration MR is promoting a new understanding of the sea-crossing abilities of witches. The new idea suggests that witches from Ghana cross the Atlantic and the Pacific and enter Australia with their powers.⁵⁶⁰

In the PCM's emerging worldview, witches are transnational. They travel across national boundaries.⁵⁶¹ The intensity of the PCM's anti-witchcraft ritual reflects the members' deep concern about this ability of witches. The migrants explained that they used to believe

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Wuaku, 40-41.

⁵⁶⁰ Telephone communication with Pastor Chimanya on 20/04/2015. Dovlo; Ter Haar, "Strangers in the Promised Land: African Christians in Europe."

⁵⁶¹ Telephone communication with Chimanya on 20/04/2015.

that migration was one way of escaping witches in the homeland. However, this view is changing. The challenges worshippers said they experienced in the host land and their attempts to make sense of them have given birth to post-migration beliefs about witchcraft and a set of related ritual practices. I have discussed in this section PCM's rituals that the Church has designed to destroy evil activities that affect the lives of the migrants. I discuss in the next two sections rituals that the Church has set up to place the migrants in their rightful place in Australia.

6.2.3 Rituals for "Divine Access" in Australia

The PCM emphasizes that migrants need to participate in specific Church rituals in order to access business and employment opportunities, Australian passports, resident permits, and many other conditions that make migrants' lives easy in the host land.⁵⁶² The PCM refers to these rituals as "Divine Access" rituals. These rituals show continuities in the practices of the PCK and PCM. Like the pre-migration rituals of the PCK in Ghana, which help worshippers overcome challenges linked with travel visas, the ritual experts design the "Divine Access" rituals at the PCM for removing blockages to successful migrant settlements and place-making in Australia."⁵⁶³ Nevertheless, the PCM reconfigures the homeland rituals in Australia to speak to new questions that are emerging in the migrant community. Even when itinerant ritual agents from Ghana lead these rituals, they adopt ritual elements, gestures, and procedures from the homeland to the emerging questions in the Australian Diaspora. An important point here is that it is through these ritual performances that the bases for commitment and trust are forged between the migrants and the ritual experts in the new home in Australia.

After his introduction to the congregation during the 2015 Open Heavens Conference, Kusi-Boateng emphasized the relevance of this category of rituals when he explained that one of his purposes for honouring the invitation was to provide the migrants with keys to "divine access" in Australia. He said he would achieve this through the anointing rituals he would perform. That day, he declared: "In the realm of the spirit, Australia is a nation with great opportunities, but these are not easily accessible to African migrants. The nation has to open up and receive you... God says in His word that wherever your foot shall tread, He will

⁵⁶² Personal communication with Chimanya at the PCM on 24/07/2015.

⁵⁶³ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng on 08/06/2015.

give unto you. This means you have divine rights of access, to settle, and prosper in this land."⁵⁶⁴ According to Kusi-Boateng, "divine right of access supersedes or overrides any social barriers or legal impediments restricting migrants' access into their places of destiny in the host land." The divine rights to access in the host land are "spiritually superimposed" on practices that restrict the place of the migrant in the host land.

Kusi-Boateng disclosed what he described as a secret or a requirement for "accessing" opportunities in Australia: "Having access to Australian passports is not the secret to your access to success here... The secret for access to opportunities here is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Do not forget, this is the great Southland of the Holy Spirit according to prophecies over the land, and so the anointing of the Spirit would open doors of opportunities and access for you."⁵⁶⁵ Many of the members stood up and shouted: "thank you, Jesus, for such a revelation." Others shouted excitedly, "Glory!" Some members simply stood with their hands on their chests or on their heads, in reverence for the spiritual secrets to accessing opportunities that Kusi-Boateng shared with them.

Amidst clapping and the playing of musical instrumentals, Kusi-Boateng continued. "The anointing of the Holy Spirit is also the key to accessing divine directions to your purpose in Australia... In fact, when the anointing comes on you, some of you will be blessed in such a way that, there would be no need for you to remain here... You would have to relocate back to Africa."⁵⁶⁶ Kusi-Boateng emphasized that the anointing of the Holy Spirit guarantees access to Australian passports and success in migrants' endeavours. He added, "When the anointing comes on you, it will 'break the yoke' of denials, disappointments, and lack of finances here... You will gain favor, access to residency, and businesses that the God who brought you here has in store for you."⁵⁶⁷ Anointing of the Holy Spirit is a mediated phenomenon. In contemporary Pentecostalism, anointing often involves the physical application of oil on persons, objects, or places to effect spiritual transformation, healing, and deliverance.⁵⁶⁸ After a short song of worship, he prayed over an olive oil in a galvanized bowl and asked members to prayerfully come to front, take some of the oil, and anoint themselves, as he

⁵⁶⁴ Kusi-Boateng ministering during the Open Heavens conference 2015 at the PCM on 11/07/2015.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, "'Unction to Function': Reinventing the Oil of Influence in African Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 2 (2005): 245.

continued prophesying to them. Figure 30 shows individuals migrant worshippers anointing themselves at the PCM during the Open Heavens Conference, 2015. Pastor Chimanya held the bowl while members dipped their hands in, to anoint themselves.



Figure 30. Members dipping their hands into the anointing oil for the self-anointing ritual

Children of the migrants were included in this ritual. According to Kusi-Boateng, the children also need divine access to excel as African migrant children. In this MR ritual, the PCM creates a sense of belonging and identity for participants. Figure 31 shows the photo of Australian-born children of the migrants also taking part in the self-anointing ritual at the PCM.



Figure 31. Australian-born children of the migrants partaking in the self-anointing rituals

In African Pentecostal parlance, anointing is synonymous with inviting the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in the affairs of the anointed.⁵⁶⁹ After the self-anointing, Kusi-Boateng beckoned the PCM members to repeat the following after him: "In the name of Jesus, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit in this place, I enter into divine access in Australia, nothing shall by any means stop me!"⁵⁷⁰ Kusi-Boateng ordered the congregation to repeat the statements three times. Repeating a statement three times in Ghanaian tradition is a way of emphasizing the importance or urgency of what the speaker is saying.⁵⁷¹ The same process imbues creative and enabling powers in the words. In this ritual, anointing of the Holy Spirit is crucial, if the migrant must access opportunities for a successful stay in Australia. This anointing is a spiritual process that releases and accelerates the channels to opportunities.⁵⁷² Through these ritual acts of prayer, church members are participating in—that is, becoming part of—the cosmology or theology which their own bodies and actions give life to. They are both transmitters and receivers of the message. An important point here is the role of the body in these ritual acts of prayer. In his work on Swedish Charismatic Christians, Simon Coleman describes the construction of charismatic personhood as a cultural sub-model somewhat at odds with mainstream ideology. While believers think of themselves as "individuals," he explains that "much evangelical practice encourages the externalisation of aspect of the self in linguistic, material, and even gestured forms that are regarded as extending the person and associated agency into wider realms than would ordinarily seem possible."

As a way of preparing for the divine access ritual on the last day of the 2015 "Open Heavens" conference in Australia, Kusi-Boateng asked the entire congregation to dress in white. White symbolizes purity, peace, or victory in the Ghanaian culture. Wearing white foreshadowed the success that worshippers expected to follow their participation in the ritual. Kusi-Boateng also asked worshippers to bring to Church any items that represented Australia. Almost all worshippers came to Church with Australian mini-flags. The ritual is similar to the PCK's ritual practices during which worshippers bring flags of their desired destinations in the West so that God will open "travel doors" [travel opportunities] to these

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 246.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Quayesi-Amakye, "Let the Prophet Speak: A Study on Trends in Pentecostal Prophetism with Particular Reference to the Church of Pentecost and Some Neo-Pentecostal Churches in Ghana," 143-49.

⁵⁷² Personal communication with Pastor Chimanya on 03/07/2015.

countries. In fact, it represents a continuation of the PCK ritual in Ghana. A successful entry into a desired destination does not guarantee a successful life there. Migrants must participate in flag rituals post migration for the doors to opportunities in the nations to which they have migrated to open for them.

To begin the ritual, Kusi-Boateng asked the congregation to remain standing while lifting up and waving the flags. After singing a worship song along with his music team, Kusi-Boateng said to the congregation, "Prophetically, you are using the items as points of contact to connect to this nation for 'her' to open up for you! Wave your items!" The congregation raised the flags as Kusi-Boateng had instructed. Kusi-Boateng asked the congregation to shout "access" three times and to repeat the following individual prophetic declarations. "May God give me divine access in Australia! May this nation open up for me in Jesus name! From this day forward, nobody will deny me access to my breakthroughs in this land. I cast down the metal doors, I break down the wooden fences; let the enemy against my access to this land be crippled for good... I access my doors of opportunities and no one can or shall ever shut them in Jesus name!" The congregation repeated these declarations in an emphatic tone.

Worshippers at the PCM believe that when they say a prayer forcefully, the changes they want to see in their lives happen faster. Newton explained that such declarations are prophetic in nature; they command change, enable things to happen, and can stop things from happening too.⁵⁷³ Mara, another worshipper explained how such ritual prayers energized, empowered, and excited her about her prospects of living in Australia. She explained that participating in the ritual, made her feel that the PCM had given her weapons to fight her fears as a migrant in Australia. My point in describing these rituals, is to demonstrate that PCM ritual experts design post-migration rituals to offer migrants spiritual backing in their endeavours, as they settle down to their new lives as migrants in Australia.

While Kusi-Boateng was still prophesying to migrant worshippers after the "access" declarations, Pastor Chimanya initiated another portion of the ritual. He asked the migrant members to "sow a seed" of money into the life and ministry of Kusi-Boateng to "tap into the grace of access" upon his life. The seed-sowing ritual for "access" is a typical PCK practice in the homeland. Worshippers sow seeds (make special donations) so that they will be

⁵⁷³ Personal communication with Newton on 03/07/2014.

successful in their endeavours. Figure 32 shows a picture of the envelopes with seed money (special donations) that the members placed on the altar.



Figure 32. The white envelopes on the altar for the “seed-sowing” ritual

The PCM “seed sowing” ritual is an extension of the model in Ghana, but the object of desire is the access to opportunities in Australia. Before he started the ritual, Chimanya explained, "One thing about 'divine grace for access' is that you can tap into somebody's. Papa (Kusi-Boateng) has serious grace for divine access to opportunities and businesses that we all desire... Hear me prophetically, if you can sow a seed of between AUD200 to AUD2000, take an envelope from the ushers, write your name on it, and come forward."⁵⁷⁴ Chimanya was inviting worshippers to donate money in exchange for divine access. About 30 members went forward, kneeling or standing in front of the altar. Kusi-Boateng asked them to lift up their envelopes while he made a prayer to release the “grace for access” to them. He said, "As you sow this seed, may the anointing for accelerated opportunities, be opened to you in Jesus name! May Australia be your starting point of access into greatness!" After the prayer, he touched the people who had come forward and asked them to drop the envelopes on the altar.

In fact, the rituals here are the index of continuity between MR at the PCK and PCM. The seed sowing ritual for “access” is quintessential to the Church in the homeland. However, because of the Australian geo-cultural context, the Church assimilates notions of the global,

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

make conscious and concerted attempts to reinterpret and reconstruct through rituals and symbols, the cosmos that surrounds the migrants. Thus, in the post-migration “access” ritual, the migrant must gain access to relevant opportunities in Australia and the rest of the global-North.

6.2.4 Rituals for "Relevance in Australia"

Apart from rituals for gaining access, the PCM focus attention on the importance of migrants’ relevance in Australia, and has rituals to enable migrants achieve this goal. In its categorization of migrants’ achievements, PCM ranks relevance above success. A migrant is successful when he or she achieves a desired goal – a job, a resident permit or a house, for example. To achieve relevance, the migrants’ success must be visible both locally and internationally. One must have fame and show affluence.

Visible success (relevance) is necessary in order for the Australian community to take note and to be attracted to what the Church can offer. Visible success is also important for the migrants' continued progression into divine purpose.⁵⁷⁵ It is also a way to establish the Church in Australia to pursue its outreach mission. This is because as the migrants succeed, the Church has a higher chance of growth and success in Australia. According to Kusi-Boateng, the host society acknowledges a migrant's presence or contributions only when his or she is affluent and contributes significant benefits.⁵⁷⁶ Migrants also need relevance to realize the goals for travelling, which is generating wealth and transferring it to the homeland. Rituals for relevance, offer us insights into how post-migration MR rituals in Australia, ritually prepares migrants for achieving this highly coveted status. In Ghana, the PCK performs relevance rituals as part of a repertoire of success-enhancing rituals for members who want to make headway in life. In the PCM, that is, post-migration, ritual specialists single out “relevance” for distinct set of rituals.

The emphasis on “relevance” in the PCM is a commentary on the marginalization that African migrants feel/experience upon settling in Australia. Unlike their situations in the homeland where they are part of the majority, migrating overseas, transforms them into an invisible minority. Racial attitudes and discriminations against them, limit these African migrants’ access to employment, business, and housing opportunities, leading to their

⁵⁷⁵ Telephone communication Kusi-Boateng on the 11/09/2015.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

invisibility on the Australian portion of the global labour market.⁵⁷⁷ The PCM uses the relevance rituals to reverse the situation.⁵⁷⁸ Because Australia is an alien territory for them, migrants' visibility is of crucial importance.⁵⁷⁹ PCM migrants believe that the rituals unleash benevolent forces to support their efforts at achieving socially recognizable positions in such an unfamiliar and constricted place. In the Australian labour market where opportunities abound compared with Ghana, but avenues for people of their ethnicity seem limited, Ghanaian migrants need an additional push.

"Relevance in Australia" was an important ritual, and theme, during the "2015 Open Heavens Conference." During the ritual, Kusi-Boateng' used his travel documents as the ritual symbol. He started with an exposition on the meaning of relevance. He said it was not enough to travel and have access to residency in Australia as migrants. It was also not enough to survive in the host land by having access to menial jobs and sending few dollars as remittances to families in the homeland.⁵⁸⁰ Real success means one must be relevant: members had to attain positions, careers, and businesses of prominence in the host land. After singing to a popular tune, Kusi-Boateng said a prayer and declared relevance for members. He said, "Listen to this, it is not about what you do, who you know, or how good you are here... you must be known, you must have fame, you must be international. Look at me. I go to America and a motorcade takes me from the airport... Sometimes, I travel, just to pay off bills or pay tuition fees for people; I run a charity organization at home, and I travel to minister to be a blessing... May you also carry the same relevance here in Australia and internationally, in the name of Jesus!"⁵⁸¹ International mobility, affluence, and fame are thus, presented as important attributes of relevance. Kusi-Boateng's message highlights that he

⁵⁷⁷ Safiyya Khan and Anne Pedersen, "Black African Immigrants to Australia: Prejudice and the Function of Attitudes," *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology* 4, no. 2 (2010); James Jupp, *From Subject to Citizen: Australian Citizenship in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 92 (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Charles Kivunja, Ahmed Bawa Kuyini, and Thomas Maxwell, *Settlement Experiences of African Refugees: A Case Study of the Armidale, Tamworth and Coffs Harbour Regions of New South Wales, Australia*, vol. 49 (Sage Publications, Inc, 2014); Udo-Ekpo; Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo; Kivunja, Kuyini, and Maxwell, 49; G. Asekeh and F. Tilbury, "A Different Life: African Migrants in Western Australia," in *A Changing People: Diverse Contributions to Western Australia*, ed. R. Wilding and F. Tilbury (Perth: Office of Multicultural Interests, Dept. Premier and Cabinet, 2004).

⁵⁷⁸ Telephone communication Kusi-Boateng on the 11/09/2015.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Victor Kusi-Boateng, *Behold I Do a New Thing*, vol. 1, *Open Heavens and Power Conference* (Melbourne: Power Chapel, Melbourne, 2015), 3.

⁵⁸¹ The declarations of Kusi-Boateng at the Power Chapel, Melbourne during the "2015 Open Heavens Conference."

views himself as an embodiment of these attributes. In his explanation, the ritual transfers these attributes to worshippers. However, there is more to this ritual than the magical transfer of the specialist's attributes to worshippers. Kusi-Boateng wants the worshippers to use his life and work as "models of and for" their being relevant in Australia. He wants the migrants to learn from his success story and emulate his principles and strategies in their efforts to being relevant in Australia.

After the prayer, Kusi-Boateng raised a booklet that contained his international passport and business documents. He declared, "As I lift up this booklet containing my passports and international businesses as a point of contact, I am lifting up every migrant status and businesses here! May you move into your place of professional relevance in Jesus name! May the anointing and grace for relevance that God granted me, be available to you in the name of Jesus! Let there be a release of anointing where you shall move from the place of mediocrity into international relevance!"⁵⁸² Kusi-Boateng repeated the declaration three times.⁵⁸³ The declaration will enable migrants to attain socially prominent positions. More so, from the ritual statement, he encourages migrants to refute the low status the host community assigns them and dream bigger. Only then, will they realize their goals for migrating to Australia.

To conclude the rituals for relevance, Kusi-Boateng asked members to raise their hands to receive the anointing as he continued the declarations, "You are even afraid to attain a place of relevance here because of what you think people would say... May God arrest that principality of mediocrity! May you be released into your place of relevance in this land! Receive the anointing for relevance in this land in the name of Jesus!"⁵⁸⁴ What we see here is how Kusi-Boateng is trying to get the migrants to have different perceptions, identity, and image of themselves contrary to the perceptions they brought with them or what they had acquired upon arrival. In these rituals, the travel documents of the ritual specialist and his prophetic utterances were the important ritual symbols, while the personal story of Kusi-Boateng served as the evidence of the reality, possibility, and importance of "divine relevance" for the migrants. We also see verbal prayers and non-verbal actions as important

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

elements in the ritual process discussed. These actions are both important for spiritual breakthroughs and for defeating the devil and warding off the enemy in the diaspora.

Furthermore, the exhortation of the ritual specialist offers some sort of morale booster for the migrants' mundane efforts. The exhortation "to go beyond the normal status" to a place of relevance must be understood in professional and economic terms. The higher professional and economic levels the migrants go, the easier it is, for the PCM to succeed in the new home. Again, we see rituals communicating values for migrants' success. The idea Kusi-Boateng is communicating is that, God has chosen the migrants to come to Australia. For this reason, they are a special category, and they do not belong to the margins of Australian society. Their status as chosen people, places them on equal levels with, if not higher than, just been residents in Australia. Figure 33 shows Kusi-Boateng praying for Pastor and Mrs Chimanya as point of contact for divine access for the Church in Australia.



Figure 33. Kusi-Boateng declaring divine access and relevance upon the leaders of the PCM

One significant dimension of the ritual for relevance is the emphasis placed on being in good health. The belief is that illness could hinder one's efforts to achieving relevance. As a result, migrant worshippers of the PCM, look to these ritual practices for relevance also for their healing and physical wellbeing. Ill health includes being physically unwell and experiencing social dislocations.⁵⁸⁵ The ritual culture links ill health to supernatural causal

⁵⁸⁵ Personal communication with Kusi-Boateng on 24/02/2014.

agents, especially when these issues defy easy solutions.⁵⁸⁶ Malevolent spirits, ancestral curses, sorcery, and witchcraft cause illness in the form of bodily afflictions and social dislocations, known as *sunsum yadee* (spiritual illness).⁵⁸⁷

During the conferences, ushers carried members afflicted with terminal illnesses to the altar and the specialist led prayers for the restoration of their health. There were special prayers for people with diseases such as diabetes, blindness, chronic unemployment, and stroke. Sometimes the ritual specialists identified individual worshippers' impending physical illness or catastrophic situations through visions and led the congregation in prayers to forestall these situations. One of such cases, which stood out involved Chikande, a Zimbabwean migrant who is a construction worker. Kusi-Boateng called out his name while praying for a woman suffering from childlessness. Kusi-Boateng said to him, "I can see in the realm of the spirit that your left side is functionless, if we do not pray for you, you will be completely paralyzed by the end of the year. The devil is making efforts to destroy the purpose for which you came here... they do not want you to excel here. That stroke is not an ordinary one... In the name of Jesus, rise up and come forward!"⁵⁸⁸ The man with the aid of his wife got up and walked to the front. Kusi-Boateng touched his left side with anointing oil and declared, "He is free! Leave him to walk!"⁵⁸⁹ As with the PCK in Ghana, these conditions are avenues through which demonic agents derail Gods plans for migrants' success, excellence, and relevance for migrants.

Moreover, healing is a spiritual process through which MR promotes the physical wellbeing of migrants so that they can carry out their day-to-day activities. However, healing also advances the reverse mission because it gives the Church a status, as a healing mission. Among worshippers who attested to the efficacy of PCM healing rituals, many were Australians. Some of them mentioned the Church's miraculous healings as a factor that drew them to it and made them remain in it. The point in this section is, there is an interesting connection between the ritual and notion of relevance and the ways that the Ghanaian churches overseas, seem to be using the migrant congregations in ways to achieve

⁵⁸⁶ Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1995), 100-01; Dovlo, 67-92.

⁵⁸⁷ Gyekye, 101; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heineman, 1992).

⁵⁸⁸ Kusi-Boateng ministering at the PCM on 11/07/2015.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

“relevance” in their own terms. Having a global church network surely adds to the prestige and reputation of the churches back in the homeland.

6.3 PCM’s MR Rituals for Reverse Mission and Place-making in Australia

Aderenti Adedibu argues that the churches that African migrants’ create in their new homes overseas, are nothing but “migrant sanctuaries” or “ethnic churches.” However, the findings from the PCM show that their ritual emphasis is as much on meeting migrants’ spiritual and material needs in their settling process, as well as winning over new converts from the host community—“reverse mission.”⁵⁹⁰ What is more important is that the reverse mission agenda is a latter development of the Church as the migrants settle in the new home. In fact, the Church’s anti-witchcraft rituals, divine access rituals, rituals for relevance and healing that specifically target the needs of migrants, also advertise the Church as a Pentecostal Christian Church. The image projected intends to advance the Church’s reverse mission because it contributes to its public visibility in Australia. The image presents to the host community, a Pentecostal tradition that is new, exotic, and perhaps desired. More importantly, the PCM has rituals designed specifically to facilitate its outreach to the host community. Its main mode of outreach is the evangelistic crusade. The crusade consists of preaching tours, workshops, and bible seminars the Church organizes to attract new members. Others include deliverance and healing crusades for the host community. The goal of performing deliverance and healing during evangelistic crusades is to demonstrate to potential converts in the host community the efficacy of the PCM’s miracle working capabilities. Figure 34 shows a picture of the poster for an outreach or evangelistic mission crusade in Australia.

⁵⁹⁰ Adedibu, 405-23; Biney, 259-78; Moses O. Biney, ed. *African Christianity and Transnational Religious Networks: From Africa to America and Back to Africa*, The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa (London: Routledge, 2016), 343.



Figure 34. Picture of the poster for PCM's outreach mission crusade in Australia

The evangelistic crusades also deliberately target potential converts. The Church has a crusade team composed of preachers or evangelists and the laity. It organizes these activities periodically. Just like PCM's conferences, which it organizes at its own premise, the crusades are grander events that take place there. During such crusades, the Church invites seasoned evangelists, prophets, deliverance, and healing ritual experts from Africa to Melbourne to present "the gospel of Jesus that has the power to perform miracles, healing, and deliverance," as Kusi-Boateng described it to me. Between 27-31st of January each year, the Church organizes evangelistic, prophetic, healing and deliverance crusade for the host community, dubbed, "Come and See Jesus." I describe the January 2015 crusade to demonstrate an example of rituals specially designed for PCK's reverse mission agenda. Apostle Mahovoh and Dr. Chucks were the guest evangelists.

Mahovoh ministered on the first two nights. Starting with biblical stories during the second night, Mahovoh said, "Just like God called Peter, a fisherman, and gave him the mission to go to strange land and present the message of salvation, you can have your profession, or vision as a migrant who came to make money and go back home... Still serve to win this nation for Jesus. You may also be like Saul who later became Paul upon the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and preached the good news people of different cultures..." He sighed and continued. "There are great blessings in doing this. Doors of breakthroughs will open for you here... Remember the blessings that followed Peter and Paul?" The point here is, in the

context of PCM's rituals, the leaders present biblical narratives to support and give meaning to the ritual they perform for worshippers. After the scriptural exegeses, Mahovoh walked down the podium towards the congregation and beckoned people who wanted to be part of PCM's outreach team to walk towards him, in the front. Almost half of all the worshippers present went forward. He then removed his suit jacket, touching all at the front with it, he pronounced and prophesied that the anointing on him as a bold, and powerful evangelist be upon those present. He singled out a few and asked them to raise the hands, kneeling. He poured olive oil on their heads, stating that those have a special mission. God was going to prepare and relocate those people into different states and cities in Australia and cause them to send the "Pentecostal fire" there. What is important here is that the PCM started evangelistic crusades in 2014, but had its MR ritual conferences from its onset. What this implies is that, the MR rituals form the foundation for the establishment of the Church's outreach crusades.

A PCM leader described the rationale for such evangelistic crusades. "The Australians will not believe our message except they see the power of the Holy Spirit in action."⁵⁹¹ A member described the results since the Church started its outreach mission in 2014. "The people are opening up to our message and opening their doors to us. I have heard that some of them even want us to come and perform crusades in their cities and are saying that the African Pentecostals have the power and 'stubborn faith' that they (Australians) desire to see to believe in God..." His point is that Australia needs such a demonstration of spiritual power in order for these people to believe in Jesus. As a result, the PCM organizes prison and hospital visitations (outreach missions). During these activities, the team performs scriptural texts. With practices of the outreach crusades and other evangelistic activities, the Church performs its reverse mission in Australia.

The outreach initiative targeting different migrant and non-migrant groups in Australia marked the beginning of the PCM's reverse mission. The success of the PCM in spiritually addressing the concerns of the founding members encouraged the leadership to make this move. Chimanya, explained the rationale for this move in the following words, "If what we have as a Church has worked since we started it as a small group in the homes of individual migrants, and it is still working for us in this foreign land, then it can work for

⁵⁹¹ Telephone communication with Lydia at the PCM on 12/07/2014.

others too... It is with this joy that we invite everyone else... Many have joined us because of what they personally experienced."⁵⁹² In these words, Bruce described the outreach to the larger Australian community as a gesture intended to extend the spiritual benefits of being a member of the PCM to the host community. This understanding largely explains the PCM's strong emphasis on proselytizing in Australia. These activities are also ways these migrants and their churches establish themselves and find their place in Australia.

6.3.1 The Ritual Process and Migrant Place-making

A question that faces these African migrants in Australia is how to deal with the dislocation that has come with their migration from their homelands. In this section, I demonstrate that PCM's purchase of a warehouse and the transformation of this space into a ritual space (worshipping centre), is a migrant place-making process. Ghanaian, Zimbabwean, and other African migrant worshippers of the PCM are drawing from their religious resources to appropriate a public space in the host community for themselves. Through regular MR ritual practice, the migrants transformed this space into a venue where they shape, demonstrate, and celebrate their inherited and emergent ways of life and understandings of their migrant status. Thus, the rituals have changed the status of this space from a warehouse into an African "sacred space." Faced with their dislocation and the need for them to regroup, the migrants are using the rituals to create an alternative cartography of belonging. PCM is a reconstructed Ghanaian religious world that the migrants have created.

Through songs they sing, their dances, beliefs such as witchcraft, and the African style clothes they wear in the ritual space, African migrants perform their identities in an alien land. Regular ritual conference attendance at the PCM, offers opportunities for members to make important social contacts (both old and new), for businesses or job opportunities, sharing of experiences, news from home, trading stories, and of course, for selling homemade products. They create "intra-religious social networks."⁵⁹³ The social networks often transcend religious boundaries into social, cultural, and economic spheres in the form of socio-cultural associations especially for new African immigrants.⁵⁹⁴ Additionally, connective and collective participation in the ritual conferences also enables togetherness and communality of both migrants from Africa, and the Australian spouses and friends who

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 191.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

the Church invites to be part of its activities. Figure 35 shows a picture of the communality of both migrants from Africa and the Australian community.



Figure 35. A section of the diverse membership of the Melbourne, PCM congregation

One way in which ritual helps migrants sustain their sense of identity is the avenues they create for links between worshippers of the PCK in the homeland and the PCM in Australia. PCK streams rituals performances online so that migrant worshippers of the PCM can participate in them at the same time. My observations and communication with my interlocutors indicated that many congregants from Australia also travel to Ghana to take part in the “Signs and Tokens” ritual conferences of the PCK. While they see their participation in this ritual as necessary for their success in Australia, it is also true that these annual trips to the homeland help them to maintain links with friends and relatives, carry out projects, and attend funerals. Many migrants use these opportunities to introduce their Australian born children to aspects of Ghanaian culture. These transnational links are conduits for the flow of wealth from the diaspora, but also they ensure the home abroad connections and keep the memory of the homeland alive. During my field trip to Ghana in 2014, I also met many of the members of the Melbourne branch including the Australian-born youth of the Church from the PCM’s headquarters, actively participating in PCK’s “Signs and Tokens” conference in Kumasi. The practice of going to Ghana annually for the rituals is

an indication that these migration-centred rituals create transnational movements and linkages.

The PCM also invites various itinerant ritual specialists who come from Ghana and Zimbabwe as well as other Diaspora in the West to perform various rituals for the migrants in Melbourne, Australia. The specialists include Kusi-Boateng from Ghana, Prophet Emmanuel Makandiwa, Prophet Mahovoh from Zimbabwe, Prophets Richard and Patrice Amoaye of the God's Power Ministries, Sydney, and Prophet K.N. Ababio from the PCM in New Jersey. The network created by the itinerant ritual specialists and the travelling of the migrants back to Ghana for migrant-centred rituals conferences allow for the creation of a migration-centred ritual community that spans beyond borders. Nina Basch et al., define the transnational community as the processes by which immigrants simultaneously build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement.⁵⁹⁵ More so, because the PCM uses communication networks and social media for migrant related rituals, we can say that the PCM's transnational ritual community is also an imagined one.

In sum, in the context of PCM's MR ritual, the migrants establish their place in Australia. The PCM extends its outreach mission to Australia via the PCM's ritual culture. The rituals are also the channels through which Ghana's Pentecostal MR plays out in the Australian religious landscape. These imply that migrants before they settle in the host culture, they deploy local cultural and religious devices that are local and familiar to them, to help in their settling and place-making process. Their integration process into the host community is informed by, not only cultural resources in the host community, but also the cultural or religious resources in the homeland that they travelled with into the host community.

6.4 Conclusion

To conclude my discussions in the Chapter, I provide a brief summary and my reflections on the themes that emerged. I have examined the MR in the context defined by the Power Chapel (PCM), in Australia. The Chapter shows how post-migration MR is the foundation for PCM's reverse mission. I have shown that in the host land even though the ritual actors are

⁵⁹⁵ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (1995). Rubin Patterson, "Transnationalism: Diaspora-Homeland Development," *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (2006).

the same and that the Church maintains some rituals from PCK, there is a shift in focus and a transformation in the ritual culture, transmuting the migration religiosity. While the focus of the rituals is the facilitation of migrants' settlement in the host land, the PCM also uses its rituals to address the needs arising from its reverse mission agenda. As a dislocated group, I have shown how migrants use PCM's rituals to create a world for themselves in Australia. I have also demonstrated that ritual practices play integral roles in migrants' place-making process, transnational movements, and linkages in the Australia.

Using rituals, they address two things: their connection with familiar practices at home, a sense of home away from home, and two, they create a ritual space where they go to every week, to re-energize or find solace, even if temporary. The MR is not always located in a specific locale in the diaspora because the itinerant ritual experts are themselves transnational and members who want to benefit follow online or travel to such places. The transnational links PCM's rituals facilitate are conduits of the transfer of wealth from the diaspora in Australia into Ghana. Finally, the Chapter has shown that in the context of their MR rituals at the PCM, migrants initiate a reverse mission for the PCK. On the other hand, the reverse mission practices promote a sense of belonging for migrants in Australia. The next Chapter examines the narrative part of MR in post-migration.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POST-MIGRATION GRASSROOTS NARRATIVE AND THE COPS IN AUSTRALIA

7.0 Introduction

This Chapter examines the roles of Ghanaian migrant worshippers of the CoP in Sydney (CoPS) in extending CoP's grassroots narrative of international migration to Australia. As they settled, migrant worshippers of the Church continued to use religiously inspired pieces of individual stories as signposts, inspiration, meaning-making, and justification for their presence, place-making, and experiences or conditions in Australia. Besides, crises that plagued the Ghanaian community motivated creation and reliance on pieces of the narrative about international migration. The crises included unexplained deaths, conflicts among members, which often resulted in brawls, murders, and racial discrimination. Portions of the narrative emphasized the need for divine intervention and protection to survive in the new home. As a result, the migrants created a prayer Cell where they met to pray occasionally, for divine intervention and protection. Informed by the narrative, the migrants affiliated their Cell group with the CoP in Ghana to become CoPS.⁵⁹⁶ The affiliation prepared the grounds for the launching of CoP's overseas outreach agenda (reverse mission) in Australia. I focus my reflections of the phenomenon on four questions. How did the Ghanaian migrants introduce grassroots narrative of international migration into Australia? What is the narrative in Australia? What continuities and changes do we see in the narrations? How can we link the changes and the continuities in the accounts with migrants' post-migration situations, place-making, and the reverse mission agenda that Ghanaian migrant churches in Australia adopt?

I argue that migrants extend their meaning-making grassroots narrative of international migration which they created prior to their migration to their new home and the narrative inform how migrants interpret their experiences as they settle in the new home and serve two other purposes. On the one hand, the narrative inspires the extension of the local CoP to Australia and it is the foundation of the CoP's reverse mission in Australia. I will add that the CoP's reverse mission in Australia is a product of and founded upon migrants' decision and efforts to continue post-migration MR narratives as they settled. However, there is a shift in status of the grassroots narrative among the CoPS migrant worshippers; it

⁵⁹⁶ The migrants affiliated the Cell group with the CoP to identify itself as part of the Church in Ghana. The action was to establish their identity and be identified with the Ghanaian portion of the Church.

becomes central and mainstream narrative for establishing CoP in the host community and the tool for enabling its reverse mission agenda. In the homeland, the grassroots narrative among prospective migrant worshippers were peripheral and only played out in the lives of the worshippers.

On the other hand, the narratives also legitimize the migrants' presence and purpose in Australia. The narratives inform and provide meaning to migrants' experience and place-making in Australia.⁵⁹⁷ The developments produce continuities and changes in the Church's MR narrative in Australia. The point is, migrants who used the religiously-inspired narrative of migration during the migration process tend to continue this practice for place-making as they settle in their destination. The influence of this narrative is enduring because the migrants continue to invoke them in conversations and prayers as they settled. Australia's spiritual climate and Pentecostal prophecies, exigencies in the new locale, and quest to attract the Australian community inform and shape the narrative process. The transformation produces continuities and changes in the narrative of international migration in the host land. I refer to this narrative in the new home as the post-migration grassroots (MR) narrative. Just as it is in Chapter Four, the post-migration grassroots narrative is a composite of individual stories under themes.

The Chapter begins with a brief history of the CoPS. I will discuss the Church as a Ghanaian Pentecostal institution in Australia and describe the worship activities of the particular group I visited in Sydney. I will then demonstrate how migrants negotiate and configure old individual narratives to produce new ones in the new conditions. I will also show how the narratives do things by producing strategies and thinking tools to enable the settling and place-making process. I will then discuss how the narratives pushed for the establishment of the Church and motivated their reverse mission agenda. I had the opportunity to talk to CoP members of the Melbourne Reservoir Assembly and Granville Assembly in Sydney. I will focus here primarily on the data from the Granville Assembly, which is the headquarters of the Church in Australia, and the site the migrants established

⁵⁹⁷Manuel A. VÁSquez and K. I. M. Knott, "Three Dimensions of Religious Place Making in Diaspora," *Global Networks* 14, no. 3 (2014): 23-347; Rocha, "Transnational Pentecostal Connections: An Australian Megachurch and a Brazilian Church in Australia," 62-82; Tweed, 80-122; Marie F. Vásquez, Manuel A. Marquardt, and Ebrary, Inc., *Globalizing the Sacred : Religion across the Americas*, ed. Marie F. Marquardt Manuel A. Vásquez (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 51-54.

the first worshipping Cell in Australia.⁵⁹⁸ I base the discussions on my observations, and on the responses of 15 first-generation Ghanaian migrants at the Church in Sydney who were all members of that Church's original prayer group.

7.1 Historical Backdrop: Church of Pentecost in Australia

The Church of Pentecost in Australia, officially known as the CoP International Australia Incorporated (CoPAI), is a Pentecostal institution that Ghanaian migrants started as prayer groups in Melbourne and Sydney in 1991 and 1994 respectively.⁵⁹⁹ Currently, the Church has established branches in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and South Australia because of its growing membership.⁶⁰⁰ The Churches in these states support themselves financially and propagate their teachings independently.⁶⁰¹ The leadership of the CoPAI is mostly comprised of migrants and the Churches design services to meet migrant worshippers' needs.⁶⁰² Nevertheless, through the CoP's international Missions directorate, the CoPAI does occasionally request missionaries from Ghana to boost their outreach agenda in Australia.⁶⁰³

Between 1998 and 1999, the CoP in Ghana delegated Pastor Kwesi Ansah, who was also a migrant and the national head of the CoP in Israel, to visit and assess the viability of the group in Sydney, Australia.⁶⁰⁴ Pastor Ansah visited the group three times. The group also invited Apostle Emmanuel Konney, a Ghanaian living in Belgium to initiate revival services to attract the Ghanaian migrant community in Sydney.⁶⁰⁵ The revival services were also to make the Ghanaian migrants in the other states of Australia, aware of the official opening of the CoP in Australia.⁶⁰⁶ After series of revival meetings in Sydney, the membership of the group increased further.⁶⁰⁷ With over 40 Ghanaian migrants, Apostle Ansah assigned the administration and registration of the group with the Australian authorities to two migrants,

⁵⁹⁸ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo (the resident pastor) at the CoPS on 28/07/2014.

⁵⁹⁹ The Church of Pentecost Australia, "Our History," (Sydney: The Church of Pentecost Australia, 2013).

⁶⁰⁰ Telephone communication with Apostle Peter Andah who is now the resident Pastor for the Perth district of the CoP on 26/05/2014.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. Australia; Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*.

⁶⁰⁵ Australia.

⁶⁰⁶ Personal communication with Pastor (Marfo) of the CoP in Granville-Sydney, Australia on 27/05/2014.

⁶⁰⁷ Australia.

namely, Mr. Amachie Adjei and Mr. Osie-Offeh. These two were among the founding members of the CoPS. In June 1998, Mr. Amachie-Adjei and Mr. Osie Offeh obtained a certificate of registration for the groups in Sydney and Melbourne under the name CoP International, Australia Incorporated (COPAI).⁶⁰⁸ Apostle Ansah appointed Solomon Attuah, a graduate student migrant, as the 'Elder' of the Sydney branch (CoPS).⁶⁰⁹

7.1.1 The Church of Pentecost in Sydney (CoPS)

The place of worship for the CoPS is located on the 8 East Street Granville. In 2014, its 248 regular attendees were either Ghanaians or people of Ghanaian descent.⁶¹⁰ About 21 of the attendees were also from other parts of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, such as Nigeria, Togo, the Ivory Coast, Malaysia, South Korea, and Jamaica.⁶¹¹ At least 14 were of Australian descent, most of whom were spouses of the Ghanaian and other African migrant members.⁶¹² Among the Ghanaians, 45 percent were Akan, while the rest were from other ethnic groups in Ghana.⁶¹³ These show that although the congregation is composed largely of persons from Ghana, it is nonetheless multi-ethnic.

The Church meets on Fridays and Sundays. The Friday meetings are for prayer and worship. These take place between 7:00pm and 10:00pm. According to Pastor Marfo, the Church has two worship sessions; one in the Ghanaian Akan language (Twi) and the other, in English. The CoPS calls its English session, Pentecost International Worship Centre (PIWC). On Sundays, the PIWC meets between 9:00am and 11:30am and the Akan session meets between 11:30am and 1:30pm. Nonetheless, the Akan and English sessions of the CoPS keep the same pattern of worship including, worship, singing, clapping, giving of testimonies, preaching, and ministering to those in need of spiritual, emotional, and material support, and the sick.⁶¹⁴ Figure 36 shows the diverse worshippers of the Church, including Asian migrants. Figure 37, however, shows the Ghanaian migrant worshippers who prefer to worship in their Akan language.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ An Elder is a term for a leader who is not an ordained pastor of the CoP. It also has other meanings and functions within the Ghanaian traditional context. For example, among the Akans, Elders are the decision makers of the traditional land, custodians of customs, and traditions; they include king makers and sub-chiefs.

⁶¹⁰ Personal communication with Pastor Boafo (administrator of the Church) on 27/06/2014.

⁶¹¹ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo on 27/06/2014.

⁶¹² Ibid.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Onyinah, "Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora: An Examination of the Missions Activities of the Church of Pentecost," 230.



Figure 36. Members at worship during the English service (PIWC) in Sydney



Figure 37. Members at worship during the Akan service of the CoPS

According to Pastor Marfo, the CoPS started as a prayer group in 1994. Dr. Amish Addai-Aidoo, a Ghanaian migrant, started and led the group. The name of the group was the African Christian Fellowship (ACF).⁶¹⁵ With an initial membership of fifteen Ghanaian migrants, the group regularly had prayer meetings at the residence of Dr. and Dr. Mrs. Amish-Aidoo in Sydenham, a suburb of Sydney.⁶¹⁶ When a job transfer took Dr. Amish-Aidoo away to

⁶¹⁵ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo on 27/05/2014.

⁶¹⁶ Australia. www.pentecostau.com.

Canberra, the group moved its meeting place to the nearby suburb of Tempe in 1996.⁶¹⁷ Eventually, some of the members of the group, such as Pastor Marfo suggested [based on grassroots narrative circulating among migrant members], that they had to affiliate the group to the CoP in Ghana. In the next section, I will closely examine the components of the narrative, and show how it was central in the establishment of the CoPS in Australia. I will also demonstrate how such narrative became crucial to the creation of the Church's reverse mission and the process of place-making for the migrants in Australia. I will demonstrate that the narrative has continued and yet evolved in the diaspora.

7.2 The Grassroots Narrative of migration in Sydney: Continuities and Shifts

In recent literature on African migrant churches, considerable attention has been devoted to migrants' religious narratives in Europe and the U.S.A. Van Dijk investigates the role of migrants' Pentecostal narratives in identity formation processes among Africans who travel to Europe. Focusing on Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands, he discusses how the Ghanaian Pentecostal migrants carry to the Netherlands, Ghanaian Pentecostal narratives and how they use the narratives in creating an identity as "strangers in Dutch society."⁶¹⁸ Daswani also identifies Pentecostal narratives of citizenry or legitimate status among Ghanaian migrants in London.⁶¹⁹ He states that some members of the CoP in Europe see themselves as citizens of heaven, while others describe themselves as "African missionaries who are mandated to bring the fire of Christianity back to Europe."⁶²⁰ From Daswani's description, the lay worshippers of the CoP in London mainly propagate the narratives. From the literature, we see that the migrants do not completely abandon grassroots narratives; they continue the narrative construction in their new homes.

As was the case in the Ghanaian portion of the Church, the CoPS migrant worshippers played key roles in the creation and use of grassroots narrative of migration in Australia. The worshippers and the leaders (all migrants), contextualized biblical passages, reconfigured old narratives from the homeland, and existing Pentecostal statements in Australia as the foundation for individual grassroots narratives in addressing concerns peculiar to the

⁶¹⁷ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo at the CoPS on 27/05/2014.

⁶¹⁸ van Dijk, 135.

⁶¹⁹ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 179-200.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 181-82.

diasporic context.⁶²¹ I have put together the individual grassroots narratives in a form of composite narratives under four themes in the subsections. The themes are mainly: overseas challenges as the sign of God; Australia as spiritually dry; Australia as fertile land for witchcraft; and Australia's Pentecostal prophecies and place-making. I refer to the combination of the various themes as the grassroots narrative of international migration in Australia or the post-migration MR narrative. Part of what I have done here is to bring narratives together or seeing how various individual explanations came together in certain an overarching narrative. I do not claim that these are the only themes that make up the narrative, but are themes that I discovered among migrants of the CoPS in Australia.

7.2.1 Overseas' Challenges as "the Signs of God"

As they settled, one narrative that informed the migrants' decision to create a worshipping Cell was that, "challenges and struggles they faced as migrants in Australia were "signs from God" to get their attention or to redirect their settling processes. In the CoPS' parlance, a sign from God, or sign of God, is an indicator that God requires a person's attention in order for members to receive God's divine direction.⁶²² According to Berko, "challenges that we (they) faced upon arrival and while settling in Australia such as deportation and sudden deaths were not just ordinary. They were 'the signs of God' to draw their attention to His directions in Australia."⁶²³ Others added that the challenges were reminders to draw them back to God, so they could fulfill and redeem the pledges and promises of reciprocity they made prior and during the journeys to Australia. Elizabeth, one of the leaders and a founding member of the Church recalled the situation.

The sudden deaths within our community greatly alarmed us. Also, the continued arrests of our members compounded our worries with fear; the fear that we may all die or face being arrested without fulfilling our dreams or purposes and those of our families back home who look up to us here... We were more afraid for the younger ones—our children and siblings. After trying the social services without any sustained improvement, we had series of deliberations and the conclusion was to return to the God who brought us here for His intervention and protection... This was because we understood these unrelenting problems as "the signs" God was showing us, so that we depend on Him here, just we did before coming.⁶²⁴

⁶²¹ The leadership of the CoP in Ghana is mostly male, from the Chairman, Apostles, Pastors, and Elders; the CoPS emulates the same pattern. Women serve as leaders of the youth, children, services, and deaconess. They also lead songs or prayers during worship, serve as administrative clerks, and secretaries.

⁶²² Personal communication with Pastor Marfo.

⁶²³ Personal communication with Berko at the CoPS on 06/07/2014.

⁶²⁴ Personal communication with Elizabeth at her salon in Sydney on 30/07/2014.

Elizabeth's point is that there were stories among the migrants that the way to alleviate the deaths and arrests in the community was to intensify their devotional activities in the context of the Pentecostal practices that had prepared them for their journeys to Australia. These migrants shared these narratives among themselves as they tried to explain, find meaning to the crises, and justify the need to turn to God for help in the settling process. In other words, important to their settling processes was religious participation; as these migrants turned to religion. Konduah shared how even those who were not so religious suddenly became religious as they settled in Australia. He said, "I remember how my friend Akinteng who did not value religion at all, suddenly started coming for our monthly prayer and deliverance meetings. He started coming to the meetings because of the stories that were going around about how our lives were in danger as black African migrants, and that we needed God to keep us going in Australia."⁶²⁵ Konduah's account shows that post-migration narratives inspire migrants' religious participation even for those who were not religious.

Another grassroots narrative emerged because of the brawls within the Ghanaian migrant community. As economic migrants from Ghana began to settle in Sydney between 1990 and 1994, they organized themselves into associations based on Ghanaian ethnic affiliations. Members of these associations would meet occasionally to celebrate the naming of newborns, birthdays, marriages, and to mourn with bereaved families during funerals.⁶²⁶ However, "during such meetings, brawls would break out when rival factions from their ethnic associations met."⁶²⁷ The conflicts were either inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic, and even family crises. Various stories surrounded the conflicts that plagued the Ghanaian community when members started settling in Australia. They regarded the conflicts as inexplicable. What was more alarming, according to Dr. Aidoo, was the mysterious deaths and diseases that started occurring within the Ghanaian community.⁶²⁸ There were "strange deaths and diseases" that the migrants attributed to the work of envious, aggrieved, and malevolent migrants in the community.⁶²⁹ Stories emerged that "some of the deaths were vengeful ritual

⁶²⁵ Personal communication with Konduah at his residence in Melbourne on 02/08/2014.

⁶²⁶ Telephone communication with Dr. Amish Addai-Aidoo (a medical doctor and founder of CoPS) on 19/07/2015. At the time of communication, he was no longer a member of the CoP but had formed a new prayer fellowship in Canberra.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

killings." Some stories also suggested that some of the migrants were murdered over trivial issues such as betrayal, theft, disrespect, and bigotry.⁶³⁰

According to Berko who is a youth pastor of the Church, various stories began to circulate concerning the causes of the deaths and appropriate solutions to the community's problems.⁶³¹ One popular story was that "the mysterious or untimely deaths and destruction of the community due to persistent conflict among members were indicators that the community needed divine assistance if they had to survive."⁶³² Various stories suggested that the "deaths and other challenges they faced resulted from migrants' failure to remain faithful to the promises they made before, during, and upon arriving in Australia." Others claimed that the migrants had become complacent upon arriving and rejected God in Australia, as a result, the evil forces from the homeland and in Australia had taken over."⁶³³ There were also narratives that the "migrants were facing the challenges because they had ventured into an alienating and foreign spiritual territory and thus, needed spiritual fortification."⁶³⁴ Those incidents were spiritual attacks from the forces of the new home.⁶³⁵ Belinda narrated, "Migrants had bought into the Australian Skip-hop culture and failed to recognize that they were in a new and alienating spiritual territory, or acknowledge the God who brought them."⁶³⁶ From his explanation, Dr. Amish said that such individual narrations that prompted and inspired them to start monthly prayer meetings in his home.

From the individual stories, we can say that the migrants' narratives provided a kind of psychological empowerment; they structured their thinking and conduct. The explanations described above demonstrate how such stories were not only meaning-making mechanisms for the members of the CoPS, but also produced actions that determined how they settled in Australia. What was more important to these migrants' narratives was how they viewed their experiences as "the sign" to connect well to the God who guided them to Australia and fulfill their promises to Him and the Church they belonged to prior their journeys. The stories on challenges and deaths as "the signs of God," show a continuity of the grassroots narrative on

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Personal communication with Berko at the CoPS on 13/08/2014.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Personal communication with Eunice (a nurse) at the CoPS on 27/06/2014.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Personal communication with Belinda (student) at the CoPS on 27/06/2014.

international migration in the Australian diaspora. One of the themes of the narrative in the homeland is that, “the West is some kind of paradisiacal lands for the faithful.” Thus, one had to remain faithful to God in order to enjoy travel breakthroughs. The narrative on “the signs of God” in this section seems to suggest the need for equivalent faithful lifestyles of the migrants, if they would enjoy the settling process in the paradisiacal lands of Australia. This shows that the grassroots narratives in the homeland and in the new homes share common features, thus, a continuity of MR narrative construction process in the diaspora.

As the membership of the Cell group increased, there were individual stories among the migrant laity to institutionalize their occasional devotional practices by creating a church community. The members shared stories that indicated that the community needed a stable matrix of norms, rules, and a status if it had to survive instead of the worshipping Cell’s monthly prayer meetings. Besides, many of the migrants were members of the CoP before their migration and said they felt the need to affiliate the group to the CoP in Ghana, because of promises they made to God to extend the “CoP’s Pentecostal fire” wherever God places them overseas. Another story was that “the assistance, recognition, and support the new group would need would be forthcoming from the CoP, which has an international reputation.” These considerations explain their move to affiliate with the CoP in Ghana. Part of what I have done here is to bring narratives together or seeing how various individual explanations came together in certain an overarching narrative that mobilised the community to institutionalize the Cell group.

Nevertheless, not all of the Church’s members accepted the narrative that informed the group’s affiliation with the CoP. The concern was to maintain the Cell group and rather focus on meeting their spiritual and social needs as migrants. A beautician, Abena, shared that people left the group because they felt it was unnecessary to affiliate with the CoP in the homeland, because that would mean more responsibilities for a relatively small migrant group. The responsibilities included annual financial obligations that affiliate groups pay to the Church’s headquarters at home, salaries for the pastors that would be sent from Ghana, payment for permanent worshipping and office spaces for the Church.⁶³⁷ Abena added that some members left because they felt that they were already making financial contributions

⁶³⁷ Personal communication with Abena, one of the founding members of the CoPS at her shop in Sydney, on 12/08/2014.

to the local Assemblies of the CoP that they belonged to before their journeys, towards building and instruments. Any additional responsibility towards the Church was just a burden to them as migrants had other responsibilities towards their families in Australia and the home land. Because of these stories, some members left the group when the Cell group affiliated with the CoP to become CoPS. More importantly, many like the leader, Dr. Amish left the group later in 2013, because of the clashes of interest between the original purpose of the group and the changes that accompanied the affiliation process.⁶³⁸ One of the changes was the focus on advancing reverse mission agenda, and the new leadership that the CoP sent to lead the CoPS. The stories from Abena and Amish show that the migrants had divergent understandings and contestations concerning the institutionalization of the Cell group as a Church in Australia. This implies that there are opposing stories in the grassroots narrative constructions of MR, especially when there are new forms that restrict or are not in conformity with older narratives.

The section demonstrates how grassroots narrative on “the Signs of God,” become central to how migrants institutionalizes the local homeland Church in the new home. According to Pastor Marfo, What is important here is that migrants' individual narratives in their settling process inspired the creation of worshipping Cell and then the CoPS. The situation implies that the set of narrative that informed the creation of the CoPS provided the motivation for migrants’ conducts and religious participation in the diaspora. More so, it becomes the central source of information, motivation, and justification for establishing local Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Australia.

7.2.2 "Australia as Spiritually Dry": The Host land and Reverse Mission

Not only did the Ghanaian migrants’ narratives lead to the establishment of their worshipping Cell, after affiliating with the CoP, they created bits and pieces of stories that inspired, justified, and bolstered the establishment of the CoP in Australia. The combination of the individual narratives is what I refer to as the “reverse mission narrative” in Australia. According to Marfo, the CoP's mission to proselytize in overseas countries such as Australia became part of the Cell group’s mission when they affiliated with the CoP in Ghana.⁶³⁹ Other worshippers stated that participation in outreach mission in Australia represented the

⁶³⁸ Telephone communication with Dr. Amish on 06/07/2014.

⁶³⁹ Telephone communication with Pastor Marfo on 19/03/2015.

“fulfillment of the promises (*la promesa*) or pledges they made to the Church before their travel to Australia.” Besides, a few said they “had made promises to carry the “Pentecostal fire” to the West (Australia) if God would enable the success of their journeys.” For some, it was not enough to create the CoPS; God wanted them to reach out to the people in the land they now lived. Moreover, the CoP encouraged such practice. These and many other similar stories motivated them to initiate the Church’s outreach (reverse mission) in Australia. I identify two ideas in the narrative. First is the call or duty to evangelize Australia – an idea that the migrants regarded as a fulfilment of a kind of migrant pact with God before their travel. With this, there is a particularly strong continuity with earlier MR. Second, in the narrative of Australia as “spiritually dry,” a certain amount of innovation is involved. This narrative was not so important, if they even figured, in the pre-migration MR. Here, we also see the initial narratives become the basis of motivation for new narratives and actions migrants take in the Diaspora. The difference is that the post-migration MR narrative is not at the peripheral level as it was in the pre-migratory phase. In Australia, the narrative is key indicator that the Church in the homeland depends on, for its overseas-outreach mission.

To justify and encourage others to participate in their outreach mission in Australia, the migrant worshippers constructed a narrative that emphasized, “Australia as spiritually dry.” According to the narrative, “when the power of the Holy Spirit is not present in a place, the land experiences spiritual dryness or spiritual hunger, or even spiritual death.”⁶⁴⁰ The land becomes “spiritually dry” when it is without the spark, energy, fire, or power of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴¹ According to Yeboah, (a member of the CoPS), “It is theological neglect which causes spiritual dryness of Australia.”⁶⁴² He added, “The Australians focused their attention on sending missionaries to Africa and Asia, forgetting to take care of their home. Now, their land is spiritually dry and experiencing closed heaven. Playing loud instruments with all the modern musical instruments does not necessarily mean God is there, it could be just flesh at work.”⁶⁴³ Emmanuel, a youth Elder of the CoPS added, “Anytime the heavens close over people, the word of God does not penetrate. Atheism and secularism find breeding grounds

⁶⁴⁰ Personal communication with Marfo on 08/07/2016.

⁶⁴¹ Personal communication with Koduah on 29/06/2014.

⁶⁴² Personal communication with Yeboah, a drummer at the CoPS (Twi) on 19/05/2014.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

in that place.”⁶⁴⁴ The sense conveyed here is that as a nation, Australia has a weakened Christianity, in particular, Pentecostal spirituality.⁶⁴⁵

In his message to the congregation, an Elder at the CoPS also linked Australia's ‘spiritually dry’ condition to the lackadaisical attitude of Australia’s Pentecostals. He said, “Australian Pentecostals have spiritual knowledge, but no zeal to pray and fast.”⁶⁴⁶ He added that the Australian Pentecostals fail to spend long hours in prayer. Pastor Marfo expounded on this observation, “You do not touch God with just knowledge... Dwelling on the *logos* [written word of God] profits the body and mind, but the spirit becomes dry... that is why the land is spiritually dry... But dwelling on the *Rhema* (the spoken word of God) guarantees an “open heaven” for an individual, family, community, and the nation at large.”⁶⁴⁷ Marfo drew a contrast between Ghanaian Christians and Australian Christians, “We dwell on the *Rhema*, while Australians dwell more on the *logos*; they need us and we also need them too, because zeal without knowledge is also not good as Proverbs 19:2, says.”⁶⁴⁸ The Ghanaian migrants of the CoPS described themselves as missionaries who apart from their individual purposes in Australia have a collective agenda to bringing the *Rhema* and “fire of God back to Australia” to usher the nation into “her” rightful place of spirituality. Such individual narratives justify and endorse a missionizing agenda in Australia. The Ghanaian migrant members of the CoPS assert that one of the terms of their covenant with God prior to, or during their migration was their promise to God to be His instrument for the expansion of the CoP in the host lands.

The informants linked experiences they encountered in Australia to its “dry spirituality.” For some, “practices of discrimination against African migrants and the negative portraits of African migrants in the Australian media were proofs of the closed heavens and spiritual dryness.”⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁴ Personal communication with Emmanuel of the CoPS (PIWC) on 18/06/2014.

⁶⁴⁵ Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*, 181-82.

⁶⁴⁶ Personal communication with Sampong at the CoPS on 27/07/2014.

⁶⁴⁷ Personal communication with Marfo on 28/05/2014.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Personal communication with Antwi a taxi driver and an Organist at the CoPS (Akan) on 14/06/2014.

A number of analyses of Australian media, government policies, and social attitudes certainly suggest that Africans living in Australia are considered problematic, the undesired other, and those who fail to integrate well into the Australian society.⁶⁵⁰

These assertions had generated stereotyped perceptions about the African migrants.⁶⁵¹

The stereotyped perceptions fuelled various forms of discriminations against the African migrants in general and Ghanaians in particular, as many of them sought social benefits and opportunities in Australia. Finex Ndhlovu observes the following as traits of the African migrant that are seen to complicate their social acceptance in Australia: “they are too dark, too tall; speak too many languages; they are too culturally diverse, and belong to too many places.”⁶⁵² Ndhlovu argues that the above traits do not sit well within what it means to be Australian—monolingual, singular, and Anglo-European.⁶⁵³ The migrant members of the CoPS perceived the discrimination they face as migrants in Australia as physical manifestations of the “spiritual dryness” in Australia. In the comments below, Mr. Kantanka, a migrant member of the CoPS offered his interpretation of the situation:

Having citizenship does not mean all will be well here for you... The fact remains that you are from Africa and you are 'black' living in a country that removed its 'white only policy' in the 1970s... There is still subtle but obvious racism, classism, discriminations in policies; misunderstandings of our differences as Africans from different countries, our everyday experiences in our workplaces, schools, and just for being on the streets. There is a general perception of all black Africans here... no matter how high you rise here, the fact still remains that you the undesired Other who cannot integrate properly into the Australian society... but these are signs confirming of the dry spiritual environment we have here.⁶⁵⁴

Mr. Kantanka interpreted the identity representation of race, the politics of fear, and mistrust for the “non-desired other” as products of the “spiritual dryness.” As a result, the migrants contested the identity representations or markers. Amakye, an entrepreneur, also explained that the identity markers had kept him unemployed after several attempts at finding work as a Credit Analyst in Melbourne. He shared that after completing a university degree in

⁶⁵⁰ Kivunja, Kuyini, and Maxwell, 49; Khan and Pedersen; V. Colic-Peisker and F. Tilbury, "Being Black in Australia: A Case Study of Intergroup Relations," *Race and Class* 49, no. 4 (2008); Asekeh and Tilbury; Finex Ndhlovu, "Belonging and Attitudes Towards Ethnic Languages among African Migrants in Australia," *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 30, no. 3 (2010).

⁶⁵¹ *Becoming an African Diaspora in Australia: Language, Culture, Identity* (New York; Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁵³ *ibid.*

⁶⁵⁴ Telephone communication with Safo Kantanka at the CoPS (PIWC) on 14/06/2014.

Australia, he made calls to companies that put out job advertisements for positions in his field. Whenever he interviewed, companies would ask him to go home and wait for their call, a call that never came.⁶⁵⁵ Carbado identifies such experiences as “part of a broader social practice wherein everyone is made intelligible via racial categorization.”⁶⁵⁶ As Mapedzahama notes, black bodies in the Australian public space evoke contradictory responses, possessing ultra-visibility, while at the same time inviting invisibility and avoidance.⁶⁵⁷ Other members of the CoPS also shared these views.

However, they added that their invisibility and avoidance were all indications of the absence of God or the absence of the power of the Holy Spirit in the land. What is important here is that these migrants explain their experiences not only sociologically. There is the understanding of a spiritual causation of their experiences. Amakye explained that, "God had been taken out of the Australian society, which is why the people do not see the image of God in another human being."⁶⁵⁸ Mr. Kantanka also interpreted the situation in the following words: “These perceptions and discriminations are indicative that the land is indeed spiritually weak.”⁶⁵⁹ These views demonstrate that MR narratives played out in the daily lives of the migrants as tools for verbal contestations of perceptions and policies affecting them in the host community. The narratives also offered meaningful models in which these migrants framed their problems and hopes. What was interesting about the state of Australia’s spirituality was that the narratives contrasted Australia's material developments. The stories also contrasted the previous understanding that Australia and other Western nations were paradises, thus, a change in the narratives of the West as paradises. What this implies is that migrants shape MR narratives to their new conditions and experiences. However, this change in rhetoric speaks largely to change the Church’s agenda as a reverse mission. The Church requires a justification for its mission in Australia.

Ghanaian Pentecostal teachings are fluid, and the agents constantly reshape their narratives to suit emerging situations. Nevertheless, the harsh realities of migrant life in Australia also reinforce this characterization of the country as a "spiritually dry." Migrants from Ghana had arrived in Australia with high hopes for a better life, only to realize that living

⁶⁵⁵ Personal communication with Amakye at the CoPS (PIWC) on 19/07/2014.

⁶⁵⁶ Ndhlovu, *Becoming an African Diaspora in Australia: Language, Culture, Identity*, 41-78.

⁶⁵⁷ Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo, 78.

⁶⁵⁸ Personal communication with Amakye (in the Akan session of the CoPS) on 19/06/2014.

⁶⁵⁹ Telephone communication with Mr Safo Kantanka at the CoPS (PIWC) on 14/06/2014.

in Australia had its own challenges. The idea of a "spiritual dryness" or "closed heaven" as migrants in the PCM also refer to, are metaphors for migrants' challenges in Australia. This change in rhetoric is also an attempt for inspiring understandings of the migrants challenging experiences in the supposed paradise land.

7.2.3 Australia as fertile land for Witchcraft

The narrative on witchcraft is an extension and a counterpart of the narratives on Australia's hostility and "spiritual dryness." The overarching narrative is that Australia is fertile for witchcraft, deviant and malevolent forces, but dry and barren for true spirituality. For example, the narratives on the absence of spirituality and prophecies for revival in Australia assert that the spiritual dryness creates fertile environment for witchcraft to thrive.⁶⁶⁰ My interlocutors expressed the view that "in such an environment, it is easy for malevolent forces to wreak havoc in the lives of migrants."⁶⁶¹ The witchcraft included those that followed migrants to Australia from Ghana and found the Australian spiritual environment as a suitable breeding ground. The interviewees described a diversity of post-migration situations they faced just after they arrived in Australia. These include fear, a sense of insecurity, frustration, paranoia, feelings of betrayal, and distrust of Australia's immigration. Many of the interviewees interpreted these situations as manifestations of the activities of evil forces. Some interviewees said that their experiences in the settling process have taught them, "Witches operate against migrants, much more than they attack people back in Ghana."⁶⁶² Others shared how many of the Church's prayers, testimonies, and counselling methods demonstrate that the malevolent forces are very active in Australia.

I observed how the leaders keenly watched the actions of members during times of corporate worship. I asked one of the youth leaders, Isaac, when he was driving me to the house of my host, about what he and the other leaders were looking out for when they fixed their gaze on worshippers during worship. He commented that he and the other leaders wanted to ensure that members were truly praying "in the spirit" during that time of worship. He explained further, "Not everyone comes to Church for the right reasons. Some are witches and wizards who come to Church to steal, kill, and destroy... Some even join secret cults and witchcraft societies that are here, just to have the power, influence, and

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Dovlo, 67-68.

⁶⁶² Personal communication with Konduah.

make it big at all cost. Here, no one scorns witchcraft; people rather admire you, if you have strange powers and abilities..."⁶⁶³ He added, "unlike back home, Australia attitude towards such, has made the nation a fertile breeding ground for witchcraft practices. This makes it conducive for migrants who brought the deviant spiritual forces or acquired it here to operate. They are not afraid to bring it to Church, because they know the law is on their side if we try deliverance on them."⁶⁶⁴ Isaac concluded that the good news was that, although there were people who practice witchcraft in the migrant community, some willingly came to the Church, because they wanted deliverance. In Isaac's narratives, Australia' has a different attitude towards witchcraft, which allows people to engage in it freely. This understanding contrasts both the Ghanaian cultural and Pentecostal attitudes towards it. Moreover, witchcraft in this context not only represents unknown inner workings of an external force, but also the suspicion and critique of the presence of the evil force from among worshippers in Australian Diaspora.⁶⁶⁵

Witchcraft is also a metaphor for commenting on the predatory nature of the Australia political and economic system, as Ghanaian migrants' perceived them. Elder Daniel, a member of CoP said witches include people in Australia who benefitted from the depraved status of Ghanaian migrants. Daniel commented that although Australia is a country with great people, his experience was that the ever-changing patterns of the labour market, economic, social inequalities, and the addictive market consumption are the works of Australia's witches and wizards. These are non-Ghanaian witches and wizards in Australia, he added. Daniel also explained that using natural and supernatural abilities these witches profited from the marginalized masses. He added that Australia's witchcraft is different compared to Ghana. According to him, "In Australia, the witches do not necessarily torment people, but channel supernatural advantages towards themselves. They are ingenious. They have inventions and they upgrade products to outwit consumers."⁶⁶⁶ Daniel's description of witchcraft activities in Australia evoked an image of modernity where witches are

⁶⁶³ Personal communication with Isaac, a software developer and the youth leader at the CoPS (Akan service), on 03/05/2014.

⁶⁶⁴ Personal communication with Isaac. Many educated migrants also preferred to be part of the Akan Assembly because of its rather indigenous Pentecostal practices.

⁶⁶⁵ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 156.

⁶⁶⁶ Personal communication with Daniel, a health care assistant and member of the CoPS (Akan) on 4/05/2015.

entrepreneurs with secret knowledge to manipulate the economy and other capitalist relationships in order to profit from the gullibility of others, especially gullible migrants.⁶⁶⁷ To these migrants, the “economic witchcraft” is set up as a system that strategically targets the vulnerable such as them [migrants] who are yet to understand the ropes in Australia.

The system is such that it frustrates every effort to save, make, and send money for any meaningful projects back in Ghana, a member said.⁶⁶⁸ They described the consumer market in Australia as mysterious centres of wealth accumulation and exploiting circuits of economic exchange that Australia's witches participate in to exclude others.⁶⁶⁹ Migrants and the ordinary Australian consumers are the victims of these inventions that the witches bring to the market. Because of these inventions, Daniel and others like him, spent their hard-earned Australian dollars on such inventions that the witches through the supernatural manipulations have made the inventions “necessary evils for everyone.”⁶⁷⁰

Because of my conversation with Daniel and others at the Church, I inquired about the witchcraft narratives from the resident pastor of the CoPS. He explained that the concept was popular in Ghana, but not in Australia because witchcraft represented an aspect of the Ghanaian culture that the Church in the diaspora is gradually disassociating from. “The talk of witchcraft is inappropriate in Australia because it distracts Church members from the source of salvation—Jesus... Going down that lane would mean ‘closing the doors’ of the Church to non-Ghanaians.”⁶⁷¹ Lay worshippers did not share Pastor Marfo’s position. Many of my interlocutors stated that the concept was prevalent among the migrant members and mentioned during prayer, testimonies, and even in the preaching, they heard at the Church.

Monica, a member, explained that among the Ghanaian migrant members of the Church, the concept of witchcraft varied from one person to the other. She said she had encountered three different types of witchcraft attacks in the diaspora. The first was from the homeland. These were the jealous individuals hindering the progress of her building and business projects back in the homeland. She explained how these individuals attacked her in

⁶⁶⁷ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*, 157.

⁶⁶⁸ Personal communication with Isaac on 03/05/2014.

⁶⁶⁹ Daswani, *Looking Back, Moving Forward: Transformation and Ethical Practice in the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost*.

⁶⁷⁰ Personal communication with Daniel on 4/05/2015.

⁶⁷¹ Telephone communication with Pastor Marfo on 04/05/2015.

her dreams and physically. She had to buy three different plots of lands for the same building project. Each time she would complete a transaction she would learn to her chagrin that the owner had sold that plot to someone else. They sued her for stealing someone's land. She attributed all these anomalies to witches. She described how defeated she felt and how she nearly gave up on the project. The intervention of a pastor saved her in Australia who advised her to pray and fast, before purchasing the land she currently owns in Kumasi. Akosua also added that anytime she decided to send money to expand her business in Ghana, a family member or she would suddenly become critically ill needing urgent or intensive medical care. She would then have to channel all or part of her hard-earned Australian dollars originally apportioned for the business, to the health challenge. The health challenge would be such that the health insurance in either Ghana or Australia would not cover the cost. To her, these happenings were direct activities of "the enemies of progress—the witches."⁶⁷² Monica narrative resonated with other migrant worshippers and the kind I described in relation to the PCM ritual, where I identified an innovation such that witchcraft powers are now deemed able to travel over the waters. What is interesting here is how the narrative seems to be at both the leadership and grassroots levels in the two Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches in this research.

The second type of witchcraft Monica had to deal with as a migrant is similar to the type Daniel described, but she described them as white witches and wizards who controlled and manipulated Australia's economy and other sectors to their own advantage and to the detriment of many, including migrants. Monica shared these stories on our way to her house after a Sunday Akan service. She said the second type has different manifestations. "These witches can manifest as your employer, who would make life a hell for you as a migrant; they can also manifest as that immigration officer who just sits forever on your application and even your professor who just hates any work you do."⁶⁷³ However, she was happy that the leaders of the CoPS pray with the migrants against such malevolent forces, especially during its Friday prayer sessions. "The Church prays against such every time," she added. She shared with me how her two children, who are all in the university, have had similar encounters, and how she has had to pray against the spirit of witchcraft that stood between her and her

⁶⁷² Personal communication with Akosua at the CoPS on 18/07/2014.

⁶⁷³ Personal communication with Monica, a health assistant and member of the Akan Assembly of the CoPS on 07/05/2014.

director at her workplace. She mentioned that: "I could not understand why I was never up for promotion in my department with my qualifications and work experience when even junior staff nurses had been promoted and some had become my seniors or co-workers. I informed Pastor Marfo during a counselling session and we began to pray against witchcraft activities."⁶⁷⁴ An important point was how the leader of the Church tried to dismiss the witchcraft narratives and yet provided resources for members to deal with such encounters. It shows the enduring nature of the narrative on witchcraft among the migrants. It also shows how this grassroots narrative is not peripheral but central to, and drives the ritual actions of the Church.

The third form of witchcraft, according to Monica, is similar to the kind that Isaac described. This refers to Ghanaian migrants who came from Ghana with witchcraft. Monica considers this group to be the most dangerous because they were behind the deportation of migrants and other serious immigration challenges. Envy and jealousy motivate them. This group also falsely testifies against Ghanaian migrants leading to their deportation. These stories suggest that there is a continuation and a recreation of witchcraft narratives in the Australian diaspora. Sasha Newel rightly observes that while Pentecostals claim to transcend the activities and powers of witchcraft, they recreate new witchcraft narratives within the Church.⁶⁷⁵ Witchcraft narratives in the Australian diaspora branch of the CoP demonstrate this claim.

The worshippers occasionally invoked the character of witchcraft in conversations and the various prayers of the Church. Elder Aboagye prayed for the children of the Church during a Children's Day Celebration, and said, "May God protect your lives and may He keep you away from any danger. We destroy any witchcraft activity concerning your lives, in the name of Jesus... Any evil plans, curses, and covenants against your future, we abort in Jesus name!"⁶⁷⁶ This shows that while some of the CoPS leaders want to disassociate from witchcraft narratives as Pastor Marfo rightly stated, the Church's worship activities nevertheless invoke witchcraft narratives, perpetuating and re-crafting ideas about witchcraft that operated in the CoP in Ghana. The situation creates a disjuncture in the narrative

⁶⁷⁴ Personal communication with Monica on 07/05/2014.

⁶⁷⁵ Sasha Newel, "Pentecostal Witchcraft: Neoliberal Possession and Demonic Dis-Course in Ivoirian Pentecostal," *Sociological Analysis* 51, no. 1 (2007).

⁶⁷⁶ Prayer by Elder Aboagye for the migrants' children at the CoPS (PIWC) on 30/05/2014.

production, where leaders of the Church endeavour disassociation with witchcraft narratives, yet encourage lay worshippers to perpetuate them. The story of Elder Aboagye's prayer shows that tension does not just lie between lay worshippers and leadership. The leadership dissociates from witchcraft in certain contexts; there are also tensions in understanding true (Pentecostal) religion and what it brings and how it should operate in the new land. For example, the narrative about fulfilling Australian Pentecostal prophecies authorises the CoP in bringing something new and distinctive (potentially including practices such as exposing and overcoming the power of witches), but there are also pressures to “fit in” and so repudiate strange, foreign elements.

Among the migrants, the witchcraft narratives become thinking tools for them as they experience life in the Australian diaspora. The witchcraft narratives show the difficulties in the continuation of some narratives in this setting – especially where groups aspire to attract the natives of the new community. This is because of the quest for their expansion overseas worshippers are mindful and somehow de-emphasize their cultural specific narratives that can prevent their expansionist agenda in the host community.

7.2.4 Australia's Pentecostal Prophecies and Place-making

The migrants created entirely new narratives to make meaning of their experiences as they settled and continued to live in Australia. The composition of the narratives is what I refer to as “narrative of place-making.” The migrants created the narrative mainly from prophecies within Australian Pentecostalism to bolster their presence, purpose, and place in Australia. A number of prophecies within Australian Pentecostalism have claimed that Australia will be the centre of a largescale, global end-time revival. Australian Pentecostalism occupies a central position in the prophecy, and thus in the divine purpose and the great drama of eschatological history. The idea dates back to the origins of organised Pentecostalism in Australia, but it has taken on greater significance in recent decades. Ghanaian Pentecostals have latched onto these prophecies, seeing themselves as fulfillers of the promise. In doing so, they help to make a place for themselves within Australian sacred history, in an otherwise apparently somewhat hostile society.

The combination of the migrants' narratives concerning the Australia's prophecies is what I refer to as the “place-making narrative.” Among the various individual narratives or stories the migrants presented was that, they are the fulfillers of Australia's Pentecostal prophecies concerning an end-time revival. According to Amakye, he and many other

Ghanaian migrant worshippers of the CoPS viewed their presence in Australia as a fulfillment to the highly anticipated Australian Pentecostal prophecy. As a result, they seized, reconfigured, and drew insights from Australia's Pentecostal prophetic statements concerning its end time commission. For many of these migrants, this initiative helped them to feel secured and asserted of their place within the Australia's Pentecostal landscape. Mr Nelson shared that there were stories of migrants who did not feel welcome and had any place in Australia. Some were frustrated by discrimination in their work places and elsewhere. Some moved from one job to another and from one city to another city, trying to find a place to belong and a sense of purpose in the host land.

Joining the Church provided many with a sense of belonging. However, Adwoa explained that among many the migrants who joined the Church, there were stories that they believed God had a divine purpose for them in Australia, but they did not seem feel a sense of purpose and place in the Australian community, especially the Pentecostal community even after joining the Church. According to deacon Koduah, he and other migrants who led the Church saw a pattern of such stories whenever members came to see them (the leaders) for counseling. Koduah added that as a migrant himself, he knew the situation his fellow Ghanaian migrants experienced and after deliberating about the concerns, they felt they needed to give themselves a sense of purpose and belonging in Australia. Moreover, a few shared that they had revelations about why God sent them all the way to Australia. Mr Nelson shared that after series of meetings and prayers they established a narrative that would give them a sense of belonging and purpose, to justify their presence first as migrants and as Pentecostals in Australia.

According to Marfo, Australia's Pentecostal prophecies provided for the CoPS migrant members the foundation for establishing the pieces of narratives of their presence and the signposting of how to view and conduct themselves in Australia. The prophetic statements were about an end time revival scheduled to begin in Australia and New Zealand.⁶⁷⁷ Nelson narrated how many members of the Church attach their sense of purpose to the prophecies. Nelson remarked:

⁶⁷⁷Catch The Fire Ministries, "Smith Wigglesworth's Prophetic Word of Australia's Mighty Revival," *A Call To Action* (2011).
www.barrychant.com/barrywrittings/articles/that-wigglesworth-prphecy-3/.
<http://catchthefire.com.au/2011/11/smith-wigglesworths-Prophetic-word-of-australias-mighty-revival-a-must-read/>. (Accessed 01/03/2015).

They say that in 1975 a man of God called Derek Prince declared that God had commissioned Australia and New Zealand to lead one of the greatest Christian revivals at the turn of the 21st century. They say Derek has prophesied that this revival would spread throughout the world, ushering in the triumphant second coming of Jesus. The narratives add that Smith Wigglesworth had already given a prophecy in 1922 that the “last days Revival” will happen in Australia and New Zealand... God does everything in due season, we as an African migrant Church emerged in Australia in the 21st century for this reason... God has brought us here because He has given us the zeal, anointing, and the “Pentecost Fire” to propel this end time revival.⁶⁷⁸

Nelson’s narrative follows the Australian Pentecostal end-time revival narrative. According to the narrative, in the 1900s, Smith Wigglesworth prophesied in Sydney that God had chosen Australia for the greatest end-time revival ever known to humanity.⁶⁷⁹ The revival would start towards the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries and would be the final revival before the second coming of Jesus.⁶⁸⁰ They made the narrative popular at the Four Square Gospel Church in 2011 when the pastor (Norm) shared the prophecy with over 400 participants at the four-day revival service.⁶⁸¹ According to Koduah and others, many of the CoPS leaders and worshippers had attended the revival service and heard about the prophecies. Migrant members of the CoPS created narratives in the light of the Australian Pentecostal prophecies concerning the end time revival to established their presence and purpose in Australia. Members stated further, “It was not by chance that their presence in Australia had coincided with the era of the prophecy. It is God’s making, a part of the promise He made to the founders of the CoP.” Akosua, a secretary at the Church shared with me such statements.

According to Akosua, the leaders emphasize, “We are here at this time because, the time has come for the Australian church to rise into its fullness... the time has come for Australia to fulfill its original name, ‘the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit.’”⁶⁸² The “Great South Land” language dates back to de Queiros, and has been picked up in Pentecostal myth-making about Australia’s divine purpose. The concept is entwined in the place-making narrative process. Essien, a leader at the Church also declared during a prayer meeting, “The time had come for Australia to take her place of world influence from U.S.A. and Europe

⁶⁷⁸ Personal communication with Mr Nelson at the CoPS on 29/05/2014.

⁶⁷⁹ Ministries.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.; R.H. Fallon, “Three Days with Wigglesworth at Melbourne,” *The Australian Evangel* 1, no. 8 (1927).

⁶⁸¹ Ministries.

⁶⁸² Personal communication with Akosua at the CoPS (PIWC) on 18/05/2014.

through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is time for her to be different from the European model, the American model or Asian model and be a leading nation in the newer world that is about to emerge."⁶⁸³ The two stories indicate how these worshippers create stories to show their place and purpose or their role in Australia's revival. The statements are indications of the migrants' self-understanding of their active participation and place in Australia's Pentecostal history.

These narratives authenticate the migrants' presence and connect them to the Pentecostal spirituality of Australia. This assertion resonates with Cristina Rocha's assertion that religious institutions in the host land can have an influence on the practices and the establishment of migrant churches. What we see here is that CoPS is not growing in a "deterritorialized diasporic vacuum."⁶⁸⁴ The Church is growing in the context of Australia's Pentecostalism, which is now in census terms, the second religious grouping in the country after the Catholics.⁶⁸⁵ Australian Pentecostalism has three main branches: the classical Pentecostal group such as the Assemblies of God and Independent neo-Pentecostal churches such as the Hillsong Church.⁶⁸⁶ Reiterating the prophetic declarations concerning Australia demonstrates the CoPS migrants' active recourse to participate in Australia's Pentecostal identity.

Pastor Marfo linked the Ghanaian migrants' presence in Australia with this narrative. "We, as CoPS migrant worshippers, are not only in Australia to pursue individual goals, but as divine agents whose proselytizing activities are part of the end of time revival that has been prophesied to take place in Australia."⁶⁸⁷ Apostle Andah, another migrant who was one of the founders of the Melbourne branch of the Church also added his twist to this interpretation. Arguing that "Australia is not just any Western nation, Andah explained:

On 14th May 1606, a day known among the Australian Pentecostals as 'the Day of Pentecost,' Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros proclaimed Australia as the 'Southern Land of the Holy Spirit.' The Pentecostal Churches in Australia have indicated that the year 2006 was the four hundred years since the land finished undergoing its years of

⁶⁸³ A prayer by Essien at the CoPS (PIWC) on 30/05/2014. <http://www.ourchurch.com/member/p/pacific/> (Accessed 20/07/2015).

⁶⁸⁴ Rocha, "Transnational Pentecostal Connections: An Australian Megachurch and a Brazilian Church in Australia," 62.

⁶⁸⁵ Hilary M. Carey, *Believing in Australia: A Cultural History of Religions* (Saint Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1996); Hughes, *The Pentecostals in Australia*; Sam Hey, "God in the Suburbs and Beyond: The Emergence of an Australian Megachurch and Denomination" (Griffith University, 2011).

⁶⁸⁶ 25-26.

⁶⁸⁷ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo.

incubation (Genesis 15: 13-14). From 2006 up until 2014, God had been looking for vessels through whom He would revive the land to begin the end time revival...We are the vessels and the catalysts for this revival... God has strategically brought here for such a time as this.⁶⁸⁸

Andah used Australia's Pentecostal prophecies to justify and endorse their presence not just as Ghanaian migrants, but also as Pentecostals who are "the catalysts" for the revival in Australia. Building on the prophecies, the migrants create new narratives that provide a *raison d'être* to not view themselves as ordinary migrants but as divine agents in Australia's end time revival.⁶⁸⁹

The narrative provides spiritual meanings and purposes for their presence in Australia and gives them with a sense of spiritual responsibility and attachment towards the host land. However, the narratives also enable the CoPS worshippers to "root or place-make" in Australia by offering the spiritual reason for their presence. This offers an example of how migrants' can seize narratives from the host community in the "rooting" process. These narratives suggest that the members of the CoPS who are mostly Ghanaians are essential to the realization of Australia's prophecy. Australia's revival is part of their divine assignments.

Apart from actively reiterating Australia's Pentecostal prophetic discourses and declaring prophecies over Australia, the CoPS migrant members have narratives that spell out clearly their spiritual responsibilities towards Australia's revival. Pastor Marfo shared with me how one of the mandates of the CoPS is to "be praying for the fulfillment of Smith Wigglesworth's prophecy and many similar prophecies on Australia."⁶⁹⁰ Apostle Anderson added that at every officers meeting for the Elders and leaders of the various districts of the CoP districts in Australia, he or anyone who chairs the meetings reminds the leaders about the end time prophecy over Australia and the roles they as African migrant Pentecostal Church (divine instrument) have to play in realizing this revival. Pastor Marfo emphasized:

We believe that God has brought us here to help ignite and partake in this revival. Until we play our parts as a Church and as a people, God will look for an alternative instrument... Why were we not here in the 18th or 19th century, but surfaced in Australia at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, the appointed time for the fulfillment of the prophecy? It is in fulfillment of the prophecy that is why

⁶⁸⁸ Telephone communication with Apostle Peter Andah from the CoP in Perth on 23/12/2014.

⁶⁸⁹ Personal communication with Mr Nelson at the CoPS on 29/05/2014.

⁶⁹⁰ Personal communication with Pastor Marfo on 18/05/2014.

we are here at such a time as this... We are here as God's agents and privileged to partake in this great revival.⁶⁹¹

Drawing on the Australian Pentecostal narratives, the CoPS situates its presence in Australia as timely, within the context of the Australian Pentecostal prophecy. The Church also defines its identity and role within the Australian Pentecostal field. The interpretation of the prophecy situates Ghanaian migrations to Australia in terms of divine orchestrations for Australia's revival. The presence of the Ghanaian migrants and their Pentecostal Churches [the catalyst] in the 21st century is a sign for the beginning of the end time revival in Australia. Elder Koduah clarified, "As God's instruments, God has brought us here to reach the Asia-Pacific region for Him, and so within the Oceania region, Australia, New Zealand, and the rest of the Pacific we are certain that gradually we will get somewhere."⁶⁹² Albert who plays the Church's guitar and a tertiary student explained that a common statement emphasized during prayers or sermons was that "as God's children, God has brought you here, not to simply work and send money home or enjoy life here... You are here as God's agents for the spiritual revival for this land... You are God's children and His instrument for His plan for this region and so your lives must reflect your spiritual status in Australia."⁶⁹³ The additional agenda for the migrants include the reverse mission of the Church, of which participation in the end time revival in Australia is a part. As the narratives encourage taking on spiritual responsibilities towards achieving a divine agenda, members are encouraged to take on positions that would ensure their integration within the community.

The CoPS post-migration grassroots narrative themes show that in the diaspora some Pentecostal grassroots narratives are re-configured to suit new conditions. In the same space, some narratives have to be re-enforced in order to facilitate the settling process. The post-migration narrative anchor MR in the diaspora; it provides the contexts for MR rituals, migrants' conducts, and meanings to their experiences. The narrative also provides the lenses for migrants' conducts, habits, and choices.

⁶⁹¹ Personal communication with Pastor Anderson, a missionary to the CoPS, on 18/05/2014. He was one of the missionaries that the CoP sent to help the CoPS in its overseas outreach mission.

⁶⁹² Personal communication with Koduah, an Elder and founding member of the Melbourne district of Church, 29/06/2014.

⁶⁹³ Telephone communication with Albert at the CoPS (PIWC) on 27/02/2015.

7.3 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have discussed how grassroots narrative of international migration shift from periphery to become the essential device that inform the establishment of CoPS and provide the groundwork needed for the reverse mission efforts of home base Church. I demonstrated how this development reflects the changes and continuities that we saw in the grassroots narrative of migration, prevalent in the CoP. There were themes in the narrative such as the beliefs about spiritual sources of harm against migrants. The migrants reconfigured some of these themes to suit the specific ethos of life as migrants in Australia. The discussion also showed that as the migrants established the Church, they created entirely new themes of the narrative as distinctive features of the Church in Australia. The discussion showed how these migrants seized upon Australia's Pentecostal prophecies, reconfigured them, and used them to create individual narratives to justify Ghanaian presence, experiences, and divine purpose in Australia.

The continuity and change of the grassroots migration narrative in the host land has implications for grassroots narratives. As a result, grassroots narratives both at home and in the diaspora attain common features. Also, the laity's narrative of international migration become central to establishing the presence and place of the Church, place-making of the Church's migrant worshippers, and the Church's reverse mission in Australia. This departs from how lay worshippers narrative on migration played out in the homeland. In the homeland, it was more on the personal level where individuals created narratives to inspire their travel endeavours drawing from the Church's teachings and practices, independent of the Church's leadership agenda. In the next Chapter, I tie up the arguments in the thesis and conclude the study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have argued that Pentecostal MR has emerged in Ghana and its Australian diaspora and that it plays a central role in the international migration experience of Ghanaians. I have demonstrated how this MR prepared the necessary groundwork for the two Ghanaian Churches studied to expand their influence to Australia. This MR originated from the growing association of international migration and religious practices in Ghana.

The thesis identified two sides of the Pentecostal MR. On the one hand, prospective migrants, people who are in the process of migrating, and migrants living in the West, seek forms of supernatural power to support their international migration. This has created a great demand in Ghana and its diaspora for ritual experts, rituals, and religious teachings that enable international migrations, but also support migrants throughout the process. On the other hand, as a response to the demand for religious resources in transcontinental migrations, leaders of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in Ghana and in the diaspora, shape their *modus operandi* to meet the spiritual needs of prospective (and actual) migrants, and also to globalize themselves.

The thesis also identified particular ritual practices that are used to make the journey from Ghana and the entry into Western nations smoother. Similarly, we noted that the international migration-centred religious narratives help to migrate Ghanaians make sense of their migration experiences. Findings from the study suggest that a religiosity is emerging that focuses attention on international migration. Factors that contribute to the emergence of MR include economic hardship in the homeland, stringent and inhumane immigration and visa policies of overseas [Western] nations, vibrant and powerful religious agents, and religious notions about travel. I do not claim that MR is a uniquely Ghanaian or Pentecostal phenomenon. MR is emerging in other developing countries and other religions in countries such as India and Nigeria. It would seem that as the findings in Chapter Two show, MR has economic, social, and mental benefits. Scholars must give attention to this emerging form of religiosity to understand the intricate link between religious practice and international migration in Africa.

Through intensive field research in the two Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches and their extensions in Australia—the Power Chapel (PCK) and Church of Pentecost (CoP)—I explored

the centrality of this MR in the lives of Ghanaians involved in international migration. Because the PC is ritual focused, it offered the opportunity to explore the place of rituals in this emerging religiosity. Likewise, the CoP provided an opportunity to examine the importance of narratives in migrant religiosity. This evidence enabled a consideration of how worshippers construct their meanings from their Church's teachings, and how they use these meanings to make sense of their migration experiences. An important finding in this connection is what I describe as grassroots oral narrative of international migration or the "theologizing of international migration from below." Theologizing, because the narrative is being constructed as a belief system or lens through which overseas migration is understood. This is the process whereby worshippers interpret the teachings of a Church in their own ways, and apply their interpretations to their migration experiences.

My research demonstrates that even in churches where there are no narratives at the leadership level concerning international migration, lay worshippers still construct their own. In the beginning the individual narratives are obscure and scattered among lay members. However, the laity travels with the narratives to the diaspora, engaging them as they adapt to new situations in the diaspora. The narratives of the laity become the basis for the creation and establishment of the churches overseas, thus, shifting the narratives from the periphery to the centre in the context of migrants' settling, place-making process, and reverse mission activities of the Churches. This provides new understandings of how grassroots narratives evolve to have mainstream functions in the migration process. The implication is that as narratives of the laity become better adapted to new situations, mainstream understandings are eclipsed.⁶⁹⁴ An important point the thesis also found is that the grassroots narratives of the laity provoke mainstream (clergy) theologizing, as churches seek to respond to migrants' demand. In the still growing literature on African migrant's use of religion in transcontinental movements, scholars must give greater attention to the place of lay perspectives in the constructing of international migration theologies or narratives.

In studies on religion and international migration involving populations from Africa, authors have tended to focus on the post-migration religious practices of African populations. This study has demonstrated that post-migration religious practices need to be situated

⁶⁹⁴ Rodney and W.S. Bainbridge Stark, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (London: University of California University, 1985), 2.

within the migration process. To make sense of how migrants from Africa use religion in their international migration, we must understand all the phases of the international migration experience, that is, from the pre-departure stage, through the journey itself, to the post-arrival stage. Throughout this study, we have seen that Ghanaian migrants use religion in all these phases of international migration, and that there are both continuities in innovations in their religious practice through these phases.

The data from the two Churches studied also shows inextricable connections between Ghana's international migration and religious practice. We cannot talk about one without referring to the other. As the study has shown, in the case of some individual prospective migrants, or migrants, the international migration experience is also a religious experience. God blesses worshippers by enabling their successful migration; God sends some migrants on errands in the West, the trials and tribulations that come with migrating overseas can be tests from God for the faithful. What clearly emerges is how the migration experience offers the opportunity for Pentecostals to experience God's intervention in their lives.

The findings of the thesis also demonstrates how, local religious practices in Africa and African diasporic religious practices in the West, influence and benefit from each other. This relationship is dialectic. The local religious practices, beliefs, and actors, facilitate the international migration process. In turn, international migration creates opportunities for the global transfer of local religious beliefs and practices from Africa. Migrants carry local religious beliefs and practices to their destinations in the West. The worshipping Cells the migrants create as they settle in the West are launch pads for the reverse mission agendas of the homeland churches. I illustrated this development by showing how the CoP and the PCK use migrant worshipping Cells in Australia to launch their reverse missions in the West. My analysis demonstrates that the reverse mission projects thrive on the efforts of lay migrant worshippers.

It is the Pentecostal MR that migrants extended to the Diaspora that provides the foundation for the reverse mission in the diaspora. The Churches seize this initiative only after the lay migrant worshippers have started the worshipping Cells. At home in Ghana, the Churches' emphasis on reverse mission agenda is not strong, certainly when compared to the emphasis they give to it in their diaspora extensions. This demonstrates that again, the local Ghanaian Churches rely heavily on migrants' initiatives, to achieve their reverse mission

agenda. In this regard, there seems to be more of a post-hoc opportunistic engagement with reverse mission by the Ghanaian churches, in response to migrant initiatives.

The influence of MR is pervasive in Ghana. Agents, leaders, and worshippers of all religious traditions in Ghana are involved, as I discussed in Chapter Two. More importantly, the religiosity is not only a Ghana-specific experience; it is international. During activities at the PCK in Ghana and in Australia, the prophets invited (such as Hubert and Beverly Angel) were from Zimbabwe; there were also participants from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria and elsewhere. Diverse participation indicates that there is a continent-wide, even global, demand for this religiosity. All over the continent, religious institutions are directing specific rituals and narratives to the needs of individuals involved in international migration.

One important aspect of migrant Pentecostal religions is their function as symbols of community integration and identity creation. These forms furnish migrants with spaces for meeting, creating, and performing their identities. Migrants also use these Pentecostal gatherings as sources of social support. In this study, I have not overlooked these aspects of Ghanaian migrant religious experiences in Australia. The study has shown the various ways in which the two churches play this role. My study, however, differs from other studies that identify these sociological functions as the most important reasons why African migrants in the West participate in religious activities. The bulk of this literature focuses on the role of religious practices in constructing new senses of African identity, and in rallying social resources to ease migrants' lives.⁶⁹⁵ These writings demonstrate the ways in which African migrants transform religious resources into forms of social resources through the creation and performance of identity in the context of Pentecostal practices in the diaspora.

This study has shown how Ghanaian migrants' religious motivations outweigh such considerations in their decisions to practice religion in Australia. The study shows that Ghanaian migrants do not practice religion only because they need social support, to identify with each other, or to perform culture. Ghanaian migrants in Australia practice religion because they feel they need God to direct their lives, and seek spiritual protection from

⁶⁹⁵ Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants' Use of Religion in the Migration Process," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 4 (2003); Wisdom Tetteh, "Transnationalism, Religion and the African Diaspora in Canada: An Examination of Ghanaians and Ghanaian Churches," in *African Immigrant Religions in America* ed. Jacob K. Olupona and Regina Gemignani (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Rijk Van Dijk, "From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27, no. 2 (1997); Biney.

demons and witchcraft. Besides, they see themselves as agents of God on divine assignments in the diaspora. For other worshippers, religious practice has always been a part of their lives, that is, before their coming, and during their journeys. Such people feel obligated to continue participating in worship. The motivations for participating in religious practices in the migration process are primarily religious. Any other considerations and motivations are secondary.

The Ghanaian migrant religious actors in this study do not engage religious beliefs and practices only because of the social and sociological functions that religion performs for them. They engage religious practices to continue a local migration religiosity they had brought with them to the new homes. For example, many migrants had received promises and prophecies through ritual culture of their churches in the homeland that, their breakthroughs would come in the form of an opportunity to travel to the West and God would deliver such promises only to the faithful that continued to worship God. Informed by such promise, the members viewed migration to the West as a divine reward to a faithful worshipper and thus, the continuous worship of God was a condition for benefiting from God's succour. As a result, these migrants view religious practices as crucial aspect of their lives in their homes.

We have also seen how the MR offers models that define the migrants' experiences and offer blueprints for how migrants must respond to these experiences in the host land. For example, while some interpreted their experiences as part of a divine schema, others explained their challenges in terms of spiritual attacks or attacks from other malevolent forces. More so, some post-migratory religious narratives function as "integrations discourses." They encourage migrants' integration into the Australian community by validating the migration. The Ghanaian migrants who see themselves in the light of the narrative that states that, "they are agents of God participating in the fulfillment of a prophecy involving Australia," feel they have a divine right to be in Australia. This narrative has the effect of legitimizing the presence of these migrants in Australia. The migrants construct the narratives as conscious alternative conversations, such that, it does not cast them as illegal, marginal, alien, inferior or other negative labels that are tagged onto migrants, especially, migrants from Africa in Australia. Through such MR narratives, the Ghanaian migrants set themselves apart from other migrants. To them, everything sets them

apart from other migrants, the reasons why they came, their ways of migration, and the ways of integration into the host community.

There is also the creative ingenuity of religious agents in their construction of the narratives. In the homeland, religious agents describe the West to prospective migrants as a kind of a paradise, thus, God rewards the faithful by enabling them entry into these paradises. However, when the reverse mission takes over and the religious agents define their agenda in terms of winning souls in the West, or expanding the church overseas, the West is described as a “spiritually dry place.” They define the mission of the church abroad in terms of responses to the need for the evangelization of Western nations, who, have departed from the faith.

Moreover, the thesis shows that through migration, there is a global participation in local African Pentecostal practices. In other words, the *local becomes global*. Aside from itinerant preachers who link worshippers from both sides of the African West divide, there are individual pastors in Ghana who maintain links with clientele all over the globe with modern communication devices such as cell phones and the internet. It is very common for these pastors to make telephone calls to their clientele all over the world on the mornings of specified days, and lead them in prayers or other rituals from a distance. Also, developments in the West affect local Pentecostal practices. Thus, for example, I discovered that the tougher the migration processes or immigration policies in the West, the more intense the Pentecostal MR in Ghana seemed to become. As far as African Pentecostalism is concerned, the gap between the global and local is blurred.

In the study, we have shown that Ghanaian migrants link the Ghanaian Pentecostal presence in Australia to the widespread belief in witchcraft among them. An indigenous Ghanaian theory about harm, its causal agents, and human creative ingenuity, witchcraft beliefs help migrants to make sense of some of their realities in Australia. The migrants attribute insurmountable challenges and catastrophes to witchcraft. They also explain the exploitations that they experience in Australia regarding witchcraft. Additionally, the Australian technological advancements attract witchcraft explanations. The introduction of Ghanaian witchcraft narratives into Australia, offer an intriguing example of the paradoxes that can occur in the context of MR in the Australian diaspora.

It is paradoxical that the local Ghanaian concept of witchcraft flowed into Australia through these Pentecostals. The Pentecostal MR provides new understandings about the

nature of local Ghanaian witchcraft; it is transnational. The findings also demonstrate new understandings of the ritual language; the Pentecostals use to exorcise overseas. The findings raise questions about Pentecostalism and MR. MR is shaping Pentecostal ritual language, discourse, and praxis of witchcraft and Pentecostalism is apparently a primary channel through which Ghana's local understandings of witchcraft is emerging on the Australian religious field. The paradox lies in the facts that in Ghana, Pentecostalism and indigenous religions are on opposite sides of a divide. Yet, it is through Pentecostalism that a core indigenous belief in Ghana has become a part of the Australian religious landscape. The expansion of Ghanaian Pentecostalism in the diaspora is responsible for the global spread of the indigenous religious elements that have blended in. While it is true that some Ghanaian migrants in the diaspora engage in religious practices because they come from local Pentecostal religious cultures that have integrated migration into their narratives and practices, it is also true that many of these migrants become more religious through the migration and settlement experiences. As the study shows, through the stories of the migrants, the process of uprooting and transplanting oneself, can be a traumatic one and religious narratives and ritual practices provide familiar reassurance and meaning for the migrants. Spiritual protection, security, and survival are things migrants need and the sense is that the Holy Spirit ultimately provides these. Thus, the crossover experiences also made some believe more in the tenets of these religious traditions.

Some findings from the study offer promising research leads. Notions of economic benefits for ritual agents, which came up in the findings as motivation for MR ritual practices, offer promising research leads. Travelling to or living in the richer nations of the West, prospective migrants, and migrants in Ghana are associated with wealth. It would be important to explore the extent to which the question to gain economically from services rendered to migrants, motivates Ghana's Pentecostal ritual experts. Another question that researchers can explore further, has to do with the impact of Ghanaian Pentecostal practices on the religious thinking and practice of the host culture in Australia. Aside from Ghanaian Pentecostal forms, the migrants engaged indigenous Ghanaian religious rituals too. As demonstrated in Chapter Two and Four, some of my interlocutors expressed a strong sense of conviction in the superior efficacy of indigenous religious rituals. They said that the traditional rituals offered speedy answers to questions related to their migration to, and settlement in Australia. It would be interesting to explore the place of indigenous religious

beliefs and practices in the MR. Scholars can explore how migrants deploy more than one religion in the migration process and the dynamics of how both religions support and enable migration. Moreover, the fact that women predominated in the ritual practices as ritual experts and agents in the study, suggests the need for a deeper exploration of the gendered nature of MR.

Furthermore, the emergence of international migration centered religious beliefs and practices in Ghana and its Diasporas in the West tell a larger African story. This is the story of African people showing agency and resilience in the face of restricting global socio economic, cultural, and political forces against them. This study provides us with another perspective from which to view African responses to similar past and present encounters, such as its encounter with slavery, colonization, neoliberalism, and global marginalization. Just as the Africans in those situations did, we have seen how aspiring migrants and migrants in this study use the resources of Pentecostalism to construct new religious forms and beliefs to negotiate challenges to their overseas migration plans and efforts at settling in their destinations.

Some key findings on the economic dimensions of Ghanaian migrant religion and its dynamics raise questions for future research. Although this thesis has not focused in detail on the economic dimensions of migration, such considerations would repay closer attention in future. My research highlights that migrant religions provide avenues for the transfer of wealth from the West to Africa. Religion offers avenues that link Ghanaian migrants to the homeland economically. Members of selected Churches maintain links with pastors and congregations whose rituals and good wishes saw them through the stages of their migration processes. They transfer money or remittances to aid with projects, to celebrate pastors' birthdays, and to support other activities of the Churches or concerning members. It will be important to investigate the economic motivations for the continuous interconnection and relation between the migrants and religious institutions in the homeland.

Another channel of flow of economic support is the itinerant pastors such as Kusi-Boateng who travels from the homeland to lead prophetic programs overseas, and for whom migrant worshippers contribute in the form of cash, gifts, and pledges as demonstrated in Chapter 5. As the study has also shown, some local pastors in Ghana have networks of clienteles overseas. Through phone calls, these pastors pray with these far-flung worshippers daily. In exchange, the migrant worshippers send money, gifts, and other forms of economic

support to the local pastors as tokens of their gratitude. These examples prompt further research into the importance of religion in realizing the economic goals for both migrants and religious groups. Also, it will be profitable to investigate the extent to which this economic factor is important in motivating the efforts of local churches to extend their influences to overseas countries.

More so, it will be worth to examine the importance the Pentecostal ritual experts place on their links with the migrant worshippers throughout the migration process. It is worth investigating the nature, importance, and implications of the links to the migrants in the migration process, or how political are these links to the ritual experts and the Churches in the homeland in Ghana's religious field. How important is a Ghanaian local pastor's ease of international mobility connected in any way to the ability to have access/links and over sea worshippers, or the ability to travel and garner global fame? How do these affect the status of the pastors and Churches locally and internationally? How central are the links between the pastors/prophets in the homeland and their migrant members overseas to the economic development of the Churches in the homeland? Do members provide financial support in a form of remittance to the Churches? How important is a pastor's ease in moving from place to place attending to migrant needs in determining his status among his peers?

More so, in Chapter 2, the thesis identified historical links and continuity of migration religiosity between the Ghanaian traditional and Pentecostal religions. A longitudinal research could be used to investigate the demography of the historical connections to establish the links.

Finally, the study is also timely. Migrations to overseas destinations in Europe, North America, and Australia have reached an all-time high.⁶⁹⁶ The migrations precipitate religious practices and participation.⁶⁹⁷ My hope is that my portrait of this emerging but still relatively unexplored Ghanaian religious landscape will direct scholarly attention to the phenomenon in the rest of Africa, its Diasporas, and elsewhere. We can say that any study on the link between religion and international migration in Ghana that overlooks Ghana's migration

⁶⁹⁶ DESA, "World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables," ed. Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division (New York: United Nations, 2015); Africa.

⁶⁹⁷ Hagan and Ebaugh; Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey*; Jacob K. and Regina Gemignani Olupona, ed. *African Immigrant Religions in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity*.

religiosity (MR) has missed a crucial component of the link. International migration opens the doors for local religious practices to become global but also gives rise to the creation of distinct forms of local religious practices.

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APPENDICES

A. Interview Guide for Participants of the Church of Pentecost and Power Chapel in Ghana and Australia

1. Kindly tell me your name (optional)
2. What is your age, occupation, and gender (optional)?
3. When did you become a member of this church?
4. For how long have you been a member of this church?
5. How well do you know about overseas travel in Ghana and in your Church?
6. How does this understanding affect your own understandings and plans to travel overseas?
7. What is the link between your religious belief, practice, and international migration in your Church?
8. When and how do Ghanaians involved in international migration use religion?
9. Kindly describe the spiritual help and guidance (such as *akwankyerε* or prayer) your spiritual leader provided for you or is in the process of providing for you or anyone concerning international travel.
10. How many popular/common sayings or stories in the Church about travelling overseas do you know?
11. What are the common ones?
12. Why is travelling overseas considered a divine blessing/breakthrough?
13. How has travelling overseas become spiritual issue?
14. How well do people prepare spiritually etc. prior migration, and what are some popular spiritual preparations/prayers/rituals available for obtaining overseas visas?
15. What do you think about seeking spiritual guidance/ritual/*akwankyerε* before travelling overseas?
16. Describe an example of spiritual guidance/*akwankyerε* people in the Church seek for before going for visas and
17. At what stage do people normally seek spiritual help during their travel preparations?
18. How do local religious practices concerning travel get into Ghanaian diaspora in the West?
19. How are the practices emerging in Ghana and overseas, what are its features, who are the key players and what do prior links between religion and travel share with current practice?
20. In what ways do the emerging MR influence the format, structure, and *modus operandi* of Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Ghana and the (Australian) diaspora?
21. How are the Ghanaian Pentecostal migrants and their religious practices linked to the reverse mission (in Australia)?
22. How did the Ghanaian migrants introduce migration-centred rituals into the Ghanaian diaspora (in Australia)?
23. What are these rituals like?
24. In terms of the formats and uses, what are the common feature or continuities and changes in these rituals?
25. How do you link the changes and the continuities in the rituals with your migration situations, settling?
26. How was your relationship with your pastor or prophet and Church before travel, during and while overseas; did you inform your pastor/prophet or any other spiritual/religious leader concerning your travel plans?
27. How did you inform your spiritual leader/pastor (at what stage in your travel preparations) and why?

B. Participant Information Sheet for a Study of Travelling with the Spirit: Pentecostal Migration Religiosity between Ghana and Australia

Researcher: Dorcas Dennis

School of Arts, History and Religious Studies

Victoria University of Wellington

I am a PhD student in the Religious Studies programme at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research project leading to a thesis. The PhD research I am undertaking is examining how Ghanaian Pentecostal churches facilitate the process of Ghanaian international migrations. I will examine this phenomenon mainly in Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches in Ghana and Australia. This research project has received approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee.

I am inviting men and women who are leaders or congregants of Ghanaian Pentecostal Churches in Ghana and Australia to participate in this study. Participants will be interviewed concerning the role of the church in facilitating the process of Ghanaian international migrations. In Ghana, the interviews will be scheduled for the 27/11/2013 and end on the 27/02/2014. In Australia, I will schedule the interviews for 30/04/2014 to 30/09/2014. I will interview participants during the days of church activities; before church begins, and immediately after church services.

It is very important for participants to be interviewed before church begins and after it closes rather than during the church service. This is to respect the church community's activities and protect participants' right to worship.

Should any participant(s) feel the need to withdraw from the project, they may do so without question at any time before 30/04/2015.

Responses from participants will form the basis of my research project and will be put into a written report on an anonymous basis. The written report will include direct quotations of the interviews with participants. However, it will not be possible for participants to be identified personally. Pseudonyms and grouped responses will be presented in this report.

All material collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides my supervisor Dr. Rick Weiss and I will see the responses. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Arts, Classics and Religious Studies and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Interview guides will be destroyed two years after the end of the project.

If you have any further questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at [REDACTED] or my supervisor [REDACTED] at the School of Arts, Classics and Religious Studies at Victoria University [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dorcas Dennis